

# **AN ONTOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ECCLESIAL UNION**

by  
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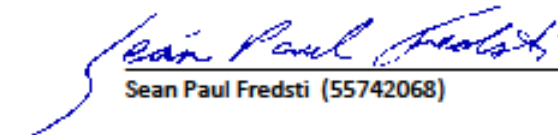
August 2019

### Declaration

I declare that AN ONTOLOGICAL HISTORY OF ECCLESIAL UNION is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



Sean Paul Fredsti (55742068)

October 28, 2018  
Date

To my wonderful wife,  
Robin  
A woman with a beautiful and precious spirit.  
She has shown me the meaning of courage in her devotion  
and has been my dear colleague in the adventure of life.

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**NOTE:** The ADDENDUM contains extended commentary and quotes that are thought to be too long or too tangential to be included in the body of the thesis. These entries are referenced throughout the text using **Roman Numerals**.

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Totus Tuus

Thanks be to God through whom all I do is possible. I am grateful to my instructors through the years who guided me; I still strive to follow their great examples.

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## Summary

A critical survey of early Church history, the works of the Church Fathers and several councils of the Church reveals a consistent call for unity. Heresies, politic intrigue and struggles for governance have aggravated attempts to remain in union. The insistence on unity and the persistence of the Church to unify reveals an ontological reality.

While our knowledge of the Church can be given in epistemological terms, looking at the Church to discover its essence, what it means to be church, opens a different way of encountering the Church and, eventually, understanding the nature of the Church to be one.

The transformations in the early Church as it spread to new cultures, the impact on the Church at the founding of “New Rome” by the Emperor Constantine, the changes brought about when Constantinople fell to the Ottomans in 1453 and the resulting birth of the Renaissance in the West with the beginning of the autocephaly Church in Russia and subsequent reunions, are especially rich in manifestations of unification among dissidence. This paper will focus on these particular moments.

The concept of looking at the essence of the Church exposes us to an understanding of what the Church is as a universal presence. Stating that the Church has no physical dimension, that it is a unique congregation abiding solely by an actual historic document or defined only by written doctrines does not show us its full essence. Likewise, seeing the Church as defined by how it differs from another, exists in objection to another church or how it avoids affiliation with others, reveals a body that does not have a unifying essence



and is lifeless. Looking closer at its essence as it is revealed over time, shows us a living Church that has repeatedly manifested unification as its particularly unique identity.

This paper is a reflective look of the Church through the ages which presents to us a look into the essence of the Church. Primary and secondary sources are critically examined with an emphasis on ontological manifestations. The moments in history that are presented in this paper are especially revealing of the unifying nature of the Church in various settings. This paper has limitations though. While the deliberate historic selections may give extraneous interpretations, it is intended to reveal previously under-estimated treasures, and this topic will require being given greater context in any expanded study.

## **Introduction**

A seminal moment in the current effort for a reunion between Roman Catholics and the Orthodox Churches was at the address of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew entitled 'Phos Hilaron' (Joyful Light) presented at Georgetown University, Washington, DC on October 21, 1997. He made it clear that the peculiar history of the Orthodox Church has shaped its very being and that East and West need a substantive unity based on a common life (Office of the Grand Chancellor, 1997).

While this difference in the manner of existing as a church may appear divisive, the ontological unity has remained the same. It is a continuous becoming into existence and developing relationships. The Church has a teleological existence ordained by its founder. It

is in a living relationship with that founder and with the members in all their diverse identities.

An understanding of this living dynamic is of special interest in understanding the Church in the East and the West. The urgency to appreciate this has been pressed upon the Churches by migration and a global communication network now available to so many (this includes the Internet and air travel). There has been an overlaying of ecclesial jurisdictions, a blurring of ethnic identities plus an amalgamation of diaspora who settle among a variety of cultures.

A localized history should no longer be an impediment to a common understanding of what it is to be a church. Today an intermingled history has provided a path, not just to a reunion but to integration. East and West have a transfigured identity in the modern interconnected world. Each now has more commonality than reasons for contention. The mysteries of the sacraments are the unifying reality of the living Church.

To understand the unity subsisting between East and West, an historical appreciation is needed. This will result in a revision of the Church's ecumenical theology. Events seen as leading to integration can also bring both parties to a deeper understanding of what it is to be the Church. Looking solely at what separates East from West gains little insight into the unifying essence of the Church. Our attention should be on the historical events that have brought about a renewed revelation of the essential unity of the Church with a new common mission and animated by diversity that is alive in sacramental mysteries.

## **Research Topic**

This is a critical research investigating of the ontological history of Church unity expressed by selected Church Fathers and Church Councils despite schisms through the ages.

## **Area of investigation**

The effort towards maintaining unity in the Church is not simply from human desire or persuasions. Rather, unity is the ontological reality of the Church. This thesis investigates the historical roots and changes to this universality as expressed in Church Councils and the writing of the Early Church Fathers.

In the Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, we find the call for the Church to be catholic (Ignatius, 2012, p. Chapter 8). Ignatius has a mystical conception of the Church as the Body of Christ. This is a mysticism that is Christocentric and based on the God-created reality of the Church. It is not simply a transcendent mysticism; rather, it is present in the liturgy and the sacramental mysteries. This mysticism is necessary for salvation and is the basis of its ecclesiology (Romanides, 1956, p. 6). Christ calls for unity within the Church. The sacramental mystery in the communion of divine life saves us and calls us to unity in the one Lord. We are obligated to avoid divisions and schisms (Romanides, 1956, p. 6).

The Church is transformed from the very beginning. From the day of Pentecost, the perseverance displayed during the early persecutions and the enriching heritage of the Early Church Fathers established a legacy for future generations. Constantine's participation in the First Council of Nicaea brought about a new public dimension to the Church. The declarations of the Council allowed it to spread even further with an internal structure to support mission efforts into the remotest parts of the world. Yet, it remained the same Church in every land down through the ages. With the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453, there was the birth of the Renaissance in the West and the establishment of the autocephaly in Russia. These challenges too gave us proof that the unity of the Church would remain. Throughout history we find expressions of the very soul of the Church as it retains unification and reunifies the separated that are lost to schism and heresy.

Delving specifically into instances when Church unity was challenged, gives us an insight into the very nature of the Church. This inquiry goes beyond questions of where is the Church, how did it come about, or when did it start? We are asking in this research what are the purposes of certain Church actions? Why the insistence on unity? Why are there such strong bonds of unity through the ages? Can history show us a living Church, acting according to this very nature of unification? Studying the history of the continuity of the Church reveals a mystery of unification in diversity and helps guide us towards understanding the persistent call to be one.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The Church spread from Jerusalem, developed through out of the Roman Empire and evolved out of Constantinople as one Church in this diversity of places. Unity is seen as a mark of the Church, expressing its very soul (EPH 4:5-6). Yet with its many members, it remains one body (1COR12:12). How could localized histories cause partitions so that some now see two incompatible entities that rival each other for the singular recognition as the one Church? What specific threads in history might reveal an understanding that there is a fabric of unity covering the Church and give us a new perspective of the ecclesiology? When we look at explicit instances of unity in the Church, we see expressions of a common spirit. Does an ontological understanding of the Church's history help us understand the very essence of the Church as unifying?

Ecclesial ontology is the effort to understand the nature and very existence of the Church. It probes into the soul of the Church. What constitutes the Church is the proper subject of Ecclesial ontology. An ontological study of the Church can reveal constitutive meaning manifested in the actions of the Church. While interpretive methods of epistemology may yield insights and understandings of ecclesial history, the difficulty is that it does not expose the essence of what Church actions mean. An ontological study of the Church can show us what constitutes the reality of the Church and helps develop a broader interpretation of its actions.

## **Concentration**

The research given in this paper will deal with the experience of the Orthodox Churches in the East and the Roman Catholic Churches in the West. The investigation will only look at certain Early Church Fathers, selected Church Councils and the beginning of the autocephaly in Russia. These are all particularly vibrant manifestations of unification among dissidence and diversity. Certainly, two thousand years of history would be far too ambitious for an overview such as this. Rather, a select series of historical highlights are being critically presented. These will be helpful in interpreting and giving context to a vast majority of Church history this paper is not able to incorporate.

## **Justification**

A review of the history of schisms and reconciliations gives us examples of the dynamics in a living Church. An analysis of that history gives insights into the meaning of the Church and the interplay of culture, society and politics in the life of the Church.

There is a different way of looking at the paradigm of division. By seeing the actions of the Church challenged by schisms and heresies as instances of unification, we can better understand the spirit of reintegration. Reunion is not a reestablishment of Church dominance. Becoming one again is the Church enlivening the diverse flock entrusted to it. Understanding this dynamic down through history encourages hope in reconciliation between Rome and the Orthodox and helps us understand the mystery of the bond that we

share in Christ. Understanding the unique experiences of the East and the West give us a deeper appreciation of the causes of division. This study provides a foundation to logically understand the teleological understanding of being Church.

### **Aims and Objects**

Ecclesial ontology is the effort to understand the nature and very essence of the Church. It probes into the soul of the Church. What constitutes the Church is the proper subject of ecclesial ontology. An ontological study of the Church can reveal constitutive meaning manifested in the actions of the Church. While interpretive methods of epistemology may yield insights and understandings of ecclesial history, the difficulty is that it does not expose the essence of what Church actions mean. The aim of this ontological study of the Church is to show what constitutes the reality of the Church and help develop a broader interpretation of its actions.

The Early Church transformed quickly from the day of Pentecost, struggled during the early persecutions, and was aided by the wisdom of the Early Church Fathers. Constantine's participation in the First Council of Nicaea brought about a new public dimension to the Church. The Church transformed again with the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453 with the birth of the Renaissance in the West and the establishment of the autocephaly in Russia. Throughout history we find expressions of the very soul of the Church as it retains unification and reunifies the separated, lost to schism and heresy. This paper will concentrate on major manifestations of the spirit of unification found in these major transformations.

The main objective of this research is to foster a critical examination of ecclesial historical to appreciate the ontology of the Church. I want to exhibit research that supports a theological re-appraisal of the experiences of Churches in their diversity. I want to methodically evaluate significant events to give an ontological perspective to aid in understanding a new ecumenical theology. I want to substantiate my proposal through critical analysis of historical events and expositions of literature on the topic that unification is of the very essence of the Church.

The secondary objective includes demonstrating an understanding of history that includes an appreciation of the actions of unity. I want to give an analysis of diverse histories that show persistent actions of unifications that give an optimism for restoration of unity. I want to promote an understanding of the paradigm of historical changes in ecclesial relations as a demonstration of inclusive diversity and not solely as irreconcilable division.

### **Research Questions, Methodology, Strategy and Hypothesis**

The research questions in this paper are intended to invoke critical questioning of the persistent, often urgent, unifying actions of the Latin and the Greek Churches as possibly reflecting part of the very essence of what the universal Church is. A selection of writings of Early Church Fathers, documents of several Church Councils and the beginning of the autocephaly in Russia are researched as manifestations of unification. After reviewing several significant events, we are presented with the persistent call to unity. What might this perseverance signify regarding the nature of the Church? What outside events invoked



these manifestations of unification? Does looking at the actions towards unification lead to more questions regarding the life of the Church and the consequences of separation? What is the effect of historical events on the development of our understanding of ecclesial ontology?

The strategy for research in this paper uses both primary and secondary literary sources. The selection of sources is based on relevance, reliability in terms of translation and scholarship, credibility in major academic discourses, how it allows for a variety of perspectives, and the cultural proximity to the events noted. Reviews have been used to evaluate the sources.

The research methodology builds on the philosophical foundations of Wilhelm Dilthey who called for attention to be paid to what the actions may have meant to the actors at the time (Dilthey, 1991), Benedetto Croce who understood historical studies as an interpretation of internal motivations (Croce, 1960) and R.G. Collingwood who emphasized that historical research requires a contextual appreciation of human actions to access the thought processes of the actors (Collingwood, 1946). Rather than a teleological understanding of history, the method of historical interpretation used in this thesis will give an emphasis to the causes and effects in the flow of history. Seminal events that invoke change can be seen as instances of purposeful expressions. The philosophical interpretation of succeeding events exhibit consequences that are both intended and unintended. Rather than a simple synoptic interpretation, this method looks at patterns in which theological uniformity are manifestations that invoke critical explanation. As a strategy, I will not use

the principles of logical positivism which emphasis terms and concepts as keys factors. The approach here is a search for clarity and new insights with existing materials.

My hypothesis is that different histories have caused a deceptive divergence in what it means to be Church in the Orthodox Eastern and Roman Western Churches. The Church is one in essence. While the manifestations have not been consistently clear, they have been persistent through the ages. There is a common essence that is manifest in the actions towards unification. To understand this, we must investigate the impact that cultural and geopolitical experiences have had on ecumenical relations. The implications of geography, politics and social forces on the churches give an appearance of disparity. Understanding the unifying essence of the Church will encourage reintegration.

## **Literature Review**

There is no shortage of comments on the relation between Eastern and Western Churches. While there are many distractors, there are also those who contribute to a useful dialogue. I have positioned my research within the body of literature that both promote unity and those that see the division of the Church as appropriate and irreconcilable. This research effort will incorporate that variety of spirit and recognize the conflict that is expressed on both sides.

It is helpful to divide this review of literature into three parts: literature that helps in defining the premise, resources that help state the controversies and tensions and works that suggest this thesis.

In defining the premise for this research, an overview of schismatic history gives us cause to acknowledge several attempts at unity immediately after a controversy. The impact of schisms cannot be understated. Often a scar remains even if a resolution is eventually made. Over the centuries, there has been a series of conflicts that must be reconciled. The works of Williston Walker, "A History of the Christian Church" (Walker, 1959) and Anthony E. Gilles', "The People of God" (Gilles, 1987) give us an opportunity to reflect on the settings of the major schisms and, more importantly, give insight into the history following these events. However, it does not go far enough to give a glimpse at the essence of the Church. Walker summarizes the reforming councils (Walker, 1959, pp. 274 - 280). He recounts how the Council of Ferrara (later transferred to Florence in 1439) ended with great joy as a reunion was proclaimed. However, as he points out, the rise of nationalism (Walker, 1959, p. 279) soon became consternation and put an end to that 'joy.'

Charles H. Kraft points out in his book, "Anthology for Christian Witness" (Kraft, 1996), that culture will transform a Church (Kraft, 1996, p. 440). Antony Gilles outlines how Vatican II addressed defining the Church as a living entity and a reflection of the reality of time and space that is present (Gilles, 1987, pp. 124 - 135). These works suggest the dynamic nature of the Church which lays a good foundation for the premise of this research.

The Church plays a large part in our culture. Culture also informs our experience of Church. Our social setting gives us the language used in religion. Our geographic position influences our understanding of the religious metaphor. Our political context shapes our outlook on ethics and immediacy of charity. It is the premise of this paper that the very notion of being church is shaped and reshaped by our culture, our society and our politics.

To better state the controversies involved in unity, the paradigm of “Church Unity” is best seen in the context of a changing geopolitical landscape. The Great Schism of 1054 was the culmination of many years of controversy. The attempts at unification that followed addressed specific issues bringing a closer understanding of the deeper controversies.

Laurent Cleenewerck makes an excellent presentation of the controversies between East and West in his book, “His Broken Body” (Cleenewerck, 2007). He points out that even the controversy of primacy can be seen as a simple functional matter and not a Eucharistic reality (Cleenewerck, 2007, p. 95). He explains that the primacy issue is a question of divine origin and ontological reality which is of direct importance to the research in this paper (Cleenewerck, 2007, p. 112). Cleenewerck states that schisms are nothing new and there are many levels of schisms over time (Cleenewerck, 2007, p. 121). He points out that new hope for a positive dialogue was initiated by Vatican II (Cleenewerck, 2007, p. 123) and work has begun anew on reconciliation. The ontology of the Roman Church is seen as universal by its own definition, extending to all people and the Churches (Cleenewerck, 2007, p. 366). As such, the controversy takes on a much deeper dimension than just one of formulas, such as celibacy and liturgical forms.

In discussing the Eastern Holy Tradition (Byzantine Catholics), Fred Saato mentions in his book, "American Eastern Catholics" (Saato, 2006), that Eastern spirituality is not based on philosophy (Saato, 2006, p. 51). I do not completely agree with this as the Greek philosophic foundations are clearly present in my opinion. Perhaps Saato is best understood as alluding to the philosophy of the Scholastics as not being a base for Eastern spirituality. The spiritual priority of the Eastern tradition stems from the liturgy not philosophic traditions (Saato, 2006, p. 51). It is the power of the liturgy that influences religious life for Easterners (Saato, 2006, p. 135). Today when many follow no religion, society has a negative impact on the religious life and there is a diminishment in the participation in the liturgy (Saato, 2006, p. 138). His reflections should also make us attentive to the effect that the socio-political settings have on religion.

While there may be a negative side to a cultural setting, a great optimism however is given in the efforts of Orthodox and Catholic dialogues. In, "The Quest for Unity: Orthodox and Catholics in Dialogue" (Dialogue, 1996), the editors point out that Pope Paul VI greeted Metropolitan Melton by falling to his knees and kissing the feet of the Metropolitan in 1975 (Dialogue, 1996, p. 33) as he arrived for a joint commission. The commission was to pursue the "re-establishment of full communion" (Dialogue, 1996, p. 47) and was to be the start of a new era. However, entrenched disagreement overcame the optimism and tensions soon returned.

The controversy of disunity is understood best when the situation is seen from both sides. George E. Demacopoulos' and Aristotle Papanikolaou's book, "Orthodox Constructions of the West" (Papanikolaou, 2013), details how the East's understandings of

the West influenced their reception of Western ideas. The authors point out how the American and French revolutions unsettled the East. The philosophy of the Enlightenment was not conducive to Eastern spirituality. These anti-western political and philosophic thoughts shaped the post-Ottoman life of the Orthodox Christian (Papanikolaou, 2013, p. 10). Later, the Communist era made the East once again see the West as different. While there was an anti-western mindset from the Fourth Crusade, the fall of Soviet Russia partially changed that age-old prejudice (Papanikolaou, 2013, p. 197). I understand this to be a particularly good insight as we in the West underestimate the experience the East had under the Ottoman Empire and Communism with its veil of secrecy. I believe the East was not about to simply capitulate to a new order after they saw themselves as the ones who sacrificed the most over the years. The West, on the other hand, basked in triumphalism. This was especially true of the United States as America assumed the position of sole superpower on the Earth.

The tension of the East and the West has not subsided over the years. Pope Benedict XVI mentions in a conversation with Peter Seewald that there are “contentious issues” which need more attention to this day (Benedict XVI, 2010, p. 89).

Suggesting a thesis that divergence was thrust upon the Church, we can start by looking at the changes in the Eastern Roman Empire after the fall of Constantinople. After the fall of Rome, the West did not experience the forced integration of diversity that the Eastern Christianity did under the Millet system introduced by the Ottoman Empire. The Church of Rome dominated the cultural landscape, while the Eastern Church existed at the wish of, and as a gift of, the Sultan (Frazee, 1969).

The influential writer Georges Vasilievich Florovsky (Геóргий Васи́льевич Флорóвский) discussed in depth the Western influence on Russian theology (Florovsky, 1975). More than at any other time, the French influenced the Czars in the 19th Century and Russia looked to the West for many things including philosophy and theology. However, after Stalin in the 20th century, Russian theology became a “wandering” theology (Florovsky, 1975, p. 177) and there was a loss of traditions over the years (Florovsky, 1975, p. 179). Under the Communist rule, there was a struggle against the West both politically and in the Church. I agree with Florovsky that this struggle created a focus on the differences between East and West.

These examples underlie how different the historical settings have been for East and West. Jean Daniélou points out in his book, “The Lord of History” (Daniélou, 1968), that we must apply principles of “a right interpretation of history” (Daniélou, 1968, p. 96). He explains that his approach to Church History starts with a direct investigation without a mystical assumption. Accordingly, an investigation supporting any thesis begins with a survey of substantiated facts. Historic trends must not become exaggerated, overly optimistic to the author’s end and avoid extraneous interpretation (Daniélou, 1968, p. 106).

It is important to ask what we can contribute to an understanding of our desire for unity. Jean Cardinal Daniélou in his book, “The Faith Eternal and The Man of Today” (Daniélou, 1970), makes a strong argument for an understanding of the “Faith Eternal” as a growing and changing faith. “The Christian people also have the duty to grow stronger in this faith” (Daniélou, 1970, p. 111).

## **Research Methodology**

This research starts with an evaluation of specific events that might contribute to an ontological perspective. The call for unity after the early persecutions and in response to schismatic heresies manifests a spirit within the Church that animated the councils and inspired many Early Church Fathers to condemn discord. Critically reading works on and about the Church Fathers and the literature on the councils gives perspective to these manifestations.

The critical historical survey of schismatic events begins this research. To set this start in context, the ecclesiology of Ignatius of Antioch is summarized. Special attention will be paid to his Letter to the Smyrnaeans, chapter 8. From that starting point, an analysis of the Sack of Constantinople in 1204 is made. This particular event sets the stage for the reconciliation petition of Pope John Paul II in 1999, which is discussed later. The survey continues with events leading up to the Great Schism of 1054. The early attempts at reconciliation, including the efforts of Pope Urban II and several unions including Florence and Basel, are recapped. The events leading to the Union of Brest and the petition of Brest with its Vatican response are detailed.

Looking into the cause and effects of these events, the roots of Eastern autocephaly and ethnophyletism are explored. These have become problems for the West as well as a source of never-ending conflict in the East with the heresy of phyletism.

With constant accusations by the East that the West is attempting to Latinize the East, and the West reminding the East to reexamine ancient traditions, we explore the deeper



causes of conflict through the centuries. Early pastoral letters reveal points of contention and give the context of the secular events that contributed to the feelings and frustrations in which these antagonistic letters were written. The analysis of what these writings meant to the authors themselves is critical to understand the fuller meaning and implications (Dilthey, 1991).

Focusing on this secular context of ecclesial contention, we look further at the situation of particular individuals who contributed to the spirit of divisiveness. This sets the stage for an understanding of how history changes human hearts.

Analyzing events that make up the decisive cause for change is the kernel of this research. The change in people's hearts caused by bitter experiences changes the outlook of the faithful. These are part of the internal motivations that allow us to understand the significance of events (Croce, 1960). The theoretical framework of how these changes take place is integrated into historical studies that give a dimensional context. The weakness of theories will be explored in the perspective of a progression of history. In this, limitations to my thesis can be seen. Concentrating on critical events brings focus to the studies, while the survey assures that non-supporting views are appreciated.

A study of the general factors that change Church relations is important to understanding how relationships changed over time. With an appreciation of the historical context and the influence of secular society, we come to understand how people dealt with conflict, even among the Churches. This allows us to gain a contextual appreciation and understanding of the spiritual essence being manifested (Croce, 1960).

An understanding of history without a prejudiced agenda is furthered by the effort to understand motivations and nuances of the actors. We can see in the cases of significant events the purposeful expression of internal principles. To avoid a simple synoptic analysis, I have undertaken contextual research that reveals patterns and exposes motivations.

The genesis of events underlying the ideas furthers our understanding of how transformation in the Church might happen. This mechanism becomes a guide to understanding how the experience of the Churches in the East and the West can come to reconciliation instead of divergence.

### **Expected Outcomes**

This research takes an expository approach to the experience of both the Western and the Eastern Churches. Culminating this study is the understanding that unity has been shown to be proper to the Church. While a union such as that experienced by the petition of Brest may not be desirable today, an integration of the Churches is possible with the reception of reconciliation and collaboration.

## Chapter Outline

### 1 - A Critical Historical Survey, revealing what it is to be Church

Early Admonitions

Early Schisms

Councils of Unity

Effects of Heresies

Trent to Today

### 2 - Cause and Effect, a history of being one Church

Deeper Causes

Social and Political Influences

Ecclesial Accommodations

Dynamics of Time

### 3 - The Missions, uniting the Church

Eastern Mission Efforts, Prelude to Autocephaly

Many People, One Faith, the Five Churches

Many Heresies, One Faith Remains

### 4 - Context of Ecclesial Ontology

Many Churches Among Many Nations

Western Christendom

Moscow as the Third Rome

Independent Reunions, New Relations

### 5 - Conclusion

## Key Terms

Autocephaly<sup>i</sup>

Church Fathers

Councils

Ecclesiology<sup>ii</sup>

Ethnophyletism<sup>iii</sup>

Ontological history<sup>iv</sup>

Orthodox

Phyletism<sup>v</sup>

Pope

Reunion

Unity

# **1 CHAPTER 1 - A CRITICAL HISTORICAL SURVEY, REVEALING WHAT IT IS TO BE CHURCH**

## **1.1 EARLY ADMONITIONS**

Admonitions against ecclesiastical division have been made throughout the history of the Christian community. This chapter is a survey covering over a thousand years of repeated calls for Church unity and recognitions that the Church unifies peoples of all lands.

This chapter begins with the Scriptural stories of the very early Church and then delves into the early heresies that confronted the Church Fathers. We can see a persistent call to unity in the Scriptures and the writings of the Church Fathers. Exploring the events surrounding the early Church, we can better understand what unity meant to the Church Fathers. With an overview of the repeated of heresies and the explanations for their condemnations, we witness the internal motivations of the Church Fathers regarding protecting unity. This gives us historical context for the later pleas for unity in the councils of the Church.

In the New Testament there are many references to unity among Christians (John 17:21-22 and Ephesians 4:3 are examples). Beyond the Scriptures, authors in the early Church carried on this admonition. In the first letter to the Corinthians, attributed to Clement of Rome around 96, we read among the first instances of a noncanonical exhortation that deplores disunity among Christians (Kleist, 1946). The author urges Christians to avoid schismatics and, for those who are separated, to repent and return to unity [chapter 3] (Romanus, 1885). This letter is responding to the community's request to address subversion

among them [chapter 1] (Romanus, 1885). The plea by the Christians of Corinth indicates that community's understanding of a theology of unity in the Church.

Threats to unity in Corinth had arisen earlier as we find in Paul's first letter to that community (1COR 3:4). Paul urged followers to separate themselves from evil members who put themselves outside of the community (1COR 5:13).

There are many instances in the Christian canonical Scriptures when relationship to community is understood as an important matter. We read in one of the Gospels of an apostle pointing out the actions of someone who is not among the group (LK 9:49). The actions of this nonmember disturbed the whole group of apostles. We also read that those who would not gather in community with the Lord are bound to scatter (LK11:23). This theme of unity among Christians is reiterated in the image of being part of the fold and there being one flock (JN 10:16). The desire for oneness is found in the Lord's Prayer before his arrest (JN 17:21) and is described as a great mystery in Paul's letter to the Ephesians (EPH 5:32).

Expressions of the unifying essence of the Church can be found in the invocation of coalescing effect of love, the healing consequences of forbearance, the retention of fraternal bonds in episcopal relationship and deferment to authority. Others do not appreciate these manifestations in the same way. Deference to an apostolic appointment does now extend beyond the local bishop in an autocephaly church. Some see no unifying attribute in the essence of the Church during moments of what might be considered to be irreconcilable decadence. Let us now explore the historical instances of the expressions of unity to better understand the motivations behind unification, give context to our reflection and help us better interpret what this may mean to our understanding of the qualities of being the Church.

How divisions in the Early Church were dealt with is important for us today. We can focus on why there were divisions to the neglect of appreciating how the Church dealt with these separations.

While Paul recommends love as the way to retain unity among Christians (1 COR 1:3), in the letter of Clement of Rome it is prescribed that kindness and forbearance are the best ways to recover unity [chapter 3] (Romanus, 1885). Counted among the Apostolic Fathers, Clement of Rome had a significant impact on the early Church. In the letter to the Corinthians attributed to him [chapter 1] (Romanus, 1885), the end of disunity is the hopeful Good News that should be sent to the brothers in Rome who have become concerned with matters in Corinth. In this same letter to the Corinthians, he is concerned with divisions between the local Bishop and several presbyters [chapter 4] (Romanus, 1885). A group of separatists had formed, and the author of this letter encouraged the local community to consider this newly formed group to be in schism with not just the local Church, but also the universal Christian community. In the Old and New Testament Scriptures are pleadings for unity that reveal the author's understanding that there are prescriptions for the defense of unity. There are many references (references are made to the Acts of the Apostles, the Letters to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Hebrews, First letter of Peter and First Letter to the Corinthians. (For more details see also (Hagner, 1997)).

Preserving the tradition of unity in the Church is a topic brought up by St. Irenaeus in his third book against the heresies (Irenaeus, 1885). In chapter 4 (Irenaeus, 1885), we find an admonition against disunity that is not just found in the Scriptures, but also is declared in the tradition of the Apostles. Irenaeus declares that the entrance to Christian life is through the Church. Even though there may be disputes in the community, all should have recourse to the

Church. He exhorts his readers to preserve ancient traditions that encourage unity. He points out that there are members of the community who have not yet read the Scriptures because of a lack of enculturation. Yet these same individuals live an exemplary Christian lifestyle based on union with the Church and its doctrines because they have heard the ancient traditions of the Apostles [Chapters 4 and 5] (Irenaeus, 1885).

At the end of his fourth chapter (Irenaeus, 1885), Irenaeus urges the community to disassociate themselves from these proponents of disunity, including Marcian and his predecessors, as well as those who are called Gnostics.

In an untitled letter to Balthus on schisms (Irenaeus, 1885), we find Irenaeus objecting to divisions in the Church that arose from different practices of the liturgical calendar. There were those who wanted to keep the Jewish calendar and there were those who wanted to ascribe Easter to the Sunday following the Spring Equinox. While we do not have the whole text of Irenaeus' letter to Balthus (Irenaeus, 1885), the comments made by Eusebius [5, 20.1] (Eusebius, 1965) indicate that Irenaeus was focusing on the schismatic tendency rather than the heretical underpinnings. Reiterating ecclesiastic authority as a means to understand the truth, Irenaeus urges the community to uphold the teachings of the legitimate Bishop in unity.

Ignatius of Antioch was one of the most prolific writers of the early Church. He is revered by both Eastern and Western Churches as one of the early Fathers of the Church (Gilles, 1984, p. 8). In his letter to the Ephesians, he addresses the issue of unity within the Church. Ignatius recommends that the community gather in fraternity with their Bishop. They are to live in unison, joined together as one community [chapter 4, letter to the Ephesians] (Ignatius, 2012). Calling the community to a unity that is visible, he urges Christians to gather around the altar of the Bishop and to partake of the one bread. He points out that those who have, out



of pride, severed themselves from the unity of the Church and their local Bishop are, by their actions, deceiving others [chapter 5, letter to the Ephesians] (Ignatius, 2012).

In the epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, we find the call for the Church to be universal [chapter 8, letter to the Smyrnaeans] (Ignatius, 2012). Ignatius has a mystical conception of the Church as the Body of Christ. It is a mysticism that is Christo-centric and based on a God-created reality that the sacramental mysteries are necessary for salvation. This is the basis for his ecclesiology. The sacramental mysteries are the communion of divine life that calls us to unity in one Lord. Christians must avoid divisions and schisms [chapter 5, letter to the Ephesians] (Ignatius, 2012).

The story of John Chrysostom is a study of schism and controversy, as well as wisdom and holiness. As a young man, John Chrysostom came to know Bishop Miletius. However, Chrysostom was well trained in the secular philosophy of the Roman Empire at the time and not immediately amenable to Christianity. Eventually, the bishop's oratory and personality appealed to him. Chrysostom received Christian baptism from Bishop Miletius and formed a close relationship with him. A few years after his baptism, Chrysostom followed a life as a hermit living near Antioch. Later, he returned to the city of Antioch. Upon his return, Bishop Miletius ordained him a deacon. In 386, he was made a priest by Flavian, the new Bishop of Antioch (Stephens, 1880, p. 123). Now Flavian was not recognized by the Bishop of Rome or by the patriarch of Alexandria (Stephens, 1880, p. 237). His episcopate was contested by an Arian bishop, Leontius, who also claimed the seat of Antioch. These series of events set the stage for the controversies that Chrysostom would find himself in later in his life (Stephens, 1880) [chp XII].

In a sudden change of events after his priestly ordination, Chrysostom was called to Constantinople after the death of the bishop there. He was immediately made the new bishop and installed as the Patriarch of Constantinople. As head of the Byzantine episcopate, Chrysostom made many reforms and encouraged a more modest way of living (Chrysostom, 1885). His criticism of extravagance and his ability to use oratory to excite people later became an irritation and a challenge for those who did not accept his pastoral care. He was the nexus of division with the community (Stephens, 1880, p. 361).

John Chrysostom fought against division in the Church community. He understood that the making of schism in the Church is an evil on par with professing heresies. The One Body of Christ is to be preserved in its unity [Homily 3 on First Corinthians 1:10] (Chrysostom, 1885).

Bishop Optatus of Milevis in Africa was also dedicated in his efforts at preserving unity within the Church. As one of the Fathers of the early Church, his letter against the Donatists had a major influence on Church leaders, especially St. Augustine (Vassall-Phillips, 1917, p. 2). In his second book (Optatus, 1917), he describes how the tranquility of the Church is disturbed by the schism of the Donatists. Nonetheless, it is with gentle pastoral care he addresses this evil. In his third book (Optatus, 1917), he beseeches the community to consider schismatics as brothers in Christ. Even if the schismatics do not reciprocate brotherly love, the charity of fraternity is to be shown them. Bishop Optatus indicates that the heresy of the Donatists was brought on by their separation from the community of the Church. He encouraged dialogue among all the parties [book 4] (Optatus, 1917).

Bishop Optatus is eager to have the reader understand that there is a distinction between those who are heretics and those who are schismatics [book 10] (Optatus, 1917). In book 11

(Optatus, 1917), he continues the same theme, pointing out that schismatics break the bond of peace in the community. They are provoked by hatred, stirred by their own passions and motivated by envy. They separate themselves from the Church. He distinguishes heretics as those who deceive others in the community with their corrupted opinions and arrogance that cuts them off from the truth [book 12] (Optatus, 1917). Therefore, according to him, heretics have separated themselves from the very source of truth, the Church, and fall into schism. Those in schism betray the brotherhood and deprive themselves of the benefit of fellowship. In both cases, there is a crippling of the individual. Least those in schism take their situation lightly, Bishop Optatus points out in book 21 (Optatus, 1917) that destroying the peace of brotherhood and remaining disobedient makes way for malice which eventually blinds members to the truth of the Gospel. He presents for consideration three commands of God. These are the prohibition against killing, against paganism and (as a way of summing up fraternal charity) a prohibition against schism. Schism is seen as a sin against unity and love of neighbor.

Augustine of Hippo makes perhaps the clearest distinction between heretics and schismatics. Though not ignoring the evil of disunity, Augustine makes an impassioned plea against what he considered the greater evil of heresy during a presentation at the Council of Hippo-Regius in 393. He makes it clear that there is a distinction between heresy and schism, not only in its form but also in its consequences. In form, the schismatic breaks brotherly charity, yet it is a sin that is more amenable to reconciliation. Heresy, however, holds errors in belief about God and therefore distracts believers from the truth and an understanding of the path to truth. Schism may bolster itself with a heresy. Heresy always leads its followers away from truth and into schism, a separation that deprives their members of the means of reconciliation, [On Faith and Creed Chapter 10] (Augustine, 1873).

These exhortations against disunity did not occur without influence from the larger secular society. Concord in each community and in the whole empire of Rome was of great importance. Harmony assured better commerce (Tempest, 2011, p. 15). Union secured civil peace. Unity created an identity of a people. Regardless of their tribal origins, all benefited from being Roman. This Roman model imbued the cultural setting of the early Christians (Levik, 1985, p. 222). However, non-Christians often saw Christians as a divisive group within the empire. (Gruen, 1974, p. 39).

Early Christians were seen as criminals, subverting the state with their strange religion. Christians were accused of atheism and anarchy [Justin Martyr, *Apology*, 5, 6; 11, 12] (Martyr, 1885) because of their rejection of the gods and the treasonable act of loyalty to Christ rather than to the emperor. Around 178, Celsus wrote “On the True Doctrine: A Discourse against the Christians” (Celsus, 1987) attacking Christianity and declaring that their religion was disquieting. As the Roman Empire was itself devastated by the Plague of Cyprian in 250, all Roman citizens were called to more fervently worship the gods and offer special sacrifice to win their favor. Christians routinely refused. The Great Persecution of Christians began 50 years later.

Although there arose apologists defending Christianity, such as Quadratus as early as 125, the reality for most Christians was the fear of mobs attacking them because of allegations of licentiousness and accusations in court of cannibalism [Dialogue 10] (Martyr, 1885). Meanwhile, there grew from within the Christian community heresies that threatened both unity and not just dogma. The example of disunity with the Church was a pall over the acceptance of Christianity.

Unlike the Greeks with their confraternity of city-states, the people of the great city in the Latium region saw themselves as members of one empire, citizens of one city: Rome. Its unity was its strength. Indeed, the Roman symbol of the *fascēs lictoriae*, adopted from the Etruscans, graphically announced that there is strength through unity. It was the great symbol of unity, power and authority for ancient Rome.

For the Christian community, unity was the strength needed against heresy. Unity attested that there was *one* Lord, and *one* true religion. Later, unity was the foundational instrument in the Byzantium Empire that made it the longest continuous empire ever on earth.

Unity was of major importance within the society at large and within the Christian community. Disunity was an appalling evil that threatened the very foundations of a people and the nativity of the new religion of Christianity.

## **1.2 EARLY SCHISMS**

The previous section examined the early Church's aversion to disunity. There was a social and political context for this. Christianity began in the Middle East under the shadow of the Roman Empire (Daniélou, 1968, p. 2). The Roman Empire was already well established, and it had expanded throughout the Mediterranean. At the time of Jesus, the Empire was transitioning from its efforts at expansion to the work of maintaining its dominance. One of the Empire's crowning achievements was its network of roads. These pathways unified the expansive empire aiding in communication, commerce and military logistics. These roads helped members of the Empire see themselves not simply as citizens of a singular city-state, but rather as participants in a far-flung civilization. No matter how far geographically an individual might be from Rome, as a citizen, they could see themselves as

Roman, members of one great civilization. Though there were a diversity of cultures, each citizen was unified by a civilization that had successfully expanded throughout the then known world.

The Roman network of roads was a concrete instrument of unity that provided for the organizational success of the Roman Empire. As the Christian Church developed, it also had concrete expressions of unity in the Scriptures, the sacraments, its mission and conformity in doctrine. The success of the secular Roman Empire was an immediate model to emulate. Early Church Fathers saw that disunity often led to heresies (e.g. The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians, Chapter XIII (Antioch, 2012, p. 96)). They saw that a critical role of the Church was to aid in the unifying the understanding of the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> They had a global understanding of the Church. Churches were not *of* Antioch, *of* Jerusalem, or *of* Rome, but rather they were addressed as individual communities. These communities were addressed as the Church *in* Rome, the Church *in* Jerusalem, the Church *in* Antioch, or addressed as the Church sojourning at Rome, or sojourning at Corinth.<sup>2</sup> Finding its life and authority in the Sacred Scriptures, many in the Church found that the Holy Spirit complemented the

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<sup>1</sup> See: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book III, Chapter 24; Tertullian, “On the Prescription of Heretics”, *De Praescr.*, 22; Origen, *De Principis*, Book 11, Chapter VII.

<sup>2</sup> See: 1Corinthians 1:2, Philippians 1:1, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans chapter I, the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians chapter I.

scriptures as being the source of discernment of ecclesial doctrine and the inspiration for contextual interpretation of the Scriptures.<sup>3</sup>

From the very first Council of the Church recorded in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 15), we find the ecclesial community holding an assembly to deliberate and find inspiration when addressing important matters. Just as the Roman Empire had risen to dominance and prestige, many looked forward to the spread of Christianity as the new coming of the Kingdom of God, based in part on a concept of unity (Eusebius, 1965, p. 324).

The early councils convened to address political and social challenges. Just as Rome had achieved a great civilization by responding to attacks from inside and from the outside, so the Church could build a great religion if it addressed internal and external challenges. Beginning in 300 the Emperor of the East, Diocletian, unleashed a savage persecution of the Christian Church. It is interesting to note that this persecution started in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. This left Christians in the west more time to organize.

Less than fifteen years later, we find in the East the beginning of the great city of Constantinople that carried on the Roman civilization for more than a millennium and in its founding, there was to be a harmonizing of the Christian religion with the Roman Empire. In 311, Emperor Galerius issued his edict of toleration ending the worst of the persecutions (Leppen, 2011, p. 141). The very next year, the victory at the Battle of Milvian Bridge inspired Constantine to make Christianity among the favored religions in the Empire (VanDam, 2011, p. 3).

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<sup>3</sup> See: discussion of 'universality principle' of St. Vincent of Lerins by L. Cleenewerck [page 41] (Cleenewerck, 2007).

No longer hiding in catacombs, the Church could now face internal matters, specifically heresies. Subsequently, a number of councils were called to address what some bishops considered to be errors that arose in the Christian community.<sup>4</sup> Often aided by the Emperor, these councils convened and deliberated on matters from the divinity of Jesus, to the organizational authority of the Church itself.

While the Church and the Western Roman Empire found itself in an ever-changing political landscape with the fall of Rome, the rise of the feudal system and the displacement of the papacy from Rome, the Eastern Church became ever more amalgamated into the singular Byzantine Empire for more than 1,000 years. The different historical experiences between East and West were to insert a wedge between the Church in the East and the West. One, very significant development was that the East morphed into a Greek speaking community while West retained Latin. The Eastern Church developed an emphasis on synods as a governing system. In the West, there was also the distinctive continuation of the papacy.

It is understandable that Roman pagans, who had newly accepted Christianity, used words and titles familiar to them in addressing their new faith community. Lacking a full appreciation of Jewish traditions, titles, such as ‘pontiff’, came with more meaning to a Latin speaking people.<sup>5</sup> Certainly the metaphor of a ‘builder of bridges’ between heaven and earth

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<sup>4</sup> See: “Discussion of Conciliar Government in the Church” by Leo D Davis, pages 21 – 27 (Davis, 1990, pp. 21 - 27).

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting that the Roman Christians use the word pontiff, which literally means bridge builder, instead of the ‘augur’ or ‘quindecimviri sacris facidundis’ as used in their pagan religion for the other priestly classes.



was not lost among the early Christians in Rome who called any bishop ‘pontiff’. He who was president over the college of bishops was addressed as Pontifex Maximus (Ayer, 1939, p. 186). This term was used in the Latin speaking West for the Bishop of Rome, the Pope as he was called later.

While the Roman vocabulary was transferred into early Christianity, the meaning took on a whole other significance. Christians did not simply substitute a new god or a new sect into the Greco-Roman world.<sup>6</sup> The Christian way was explained in depth by the Church Fathers who made it clear that it was the true religion of the singular true God (Acts 18:26). Ordinary words were transformed into a preface that would be given further refinement in the teachings of the Post-Apostolic Fathers. The councils of the Church regularly undertook the task of clarifying the meaning of these adopted words.<sup>7</sup>

It was not just from misinterpretations of the fledgling Christian culture that formal heresies arose in the Christian community. Some well-educated and masterful orators of the time often purported matters that were not understood as truths to be such for the sake of obtaining an audience. Discernment often began with opposition to errors. In response, learned people or brother bishops urged clarifications of the truth. Eventually, clarification came as a formal resolution in a counsel of bishops meeting to address specific topics. These councils were supervised by civil authorities at times, and later, strictly by Church hierarchy.

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<sup>6</sup> See Paul’s speech at the Areopagus, Acts 17: 16 - 34

<sup>7</sup> Much of this understanding of the early Church became lost to those in schisms or in protests.

It was in these councils that the guidance of the Holy Spirit was understood as most assured (Acts 15:28).

In what later would be called the Arian heresy, the First Council of Nicaea was convoked in 325 to address the propositions of the Arians (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 17). The issue of Jesus being the “only begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father” (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 17) was affirmed and formulated as the symbol for all Christianity in what was to be called the Nicene Creed. The Arian understanding of Jesus did not align with this creed and it was pronounced as heterodoxy (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 18).

It should be understood that the followers of Arius were not immediately seen as a separate religious sect. Those holding heretical views were simply seen as needing to have matters explained more accurately (Acts 18:26). Arianism was a great formal heresy in the Church. This heterodox group used philosophic terms familiar to people of the time and spoke in words similar to the rest of the Christian community. The Council did not insist on a vocabulary change, but rather a meaningful correction in understanding was to be the measure of their orthodoxy. Arius fell into a pride of culture and wanted to force a pagan theology and science into the Christian understanding as if to endow Christianity with an insight that faith otherwise could not give. His was reason redesigning faith, not reason pondering God's revelation (Luke 2:19).

Arianism had an attraction among the Roman people. Those in politics and the military appreciated a divine order of authority emanating from the one to the many, through intermediaries. True Christianity, as the Council made clear, spoke of an equality in the Godhead and a divine intimacy that was both mediated in the mysteries of salvation and

direct in its communication. The Breaking of the Bread was the highest occasion of this (Davis, 1990, p. 73).<sup>8</sup>

Social ranking had no place in true Christianity according to the Council and the Scriptures (Galatians 3:28). Arianism, on the other hand, attempted to restore a social order to this new religion of Christianity. The majority of Arian followers was in the army and appreciated social ranking (Belloc, 2015, p. 20). It was no light matter that Arianism was opposed in the Council. Possible disfavor of the army was not welcomed with the memory of the persecution still fresh in the Christian community. It took the Emperor to convoke a council to address such an explosive issue with potential dire consequences. This social and political setting explains how Arianism persisted in the Eastern Empire long after Arian's condemnation in Nicaea.

Particularism also arose in the maturing Empire. Remote parts of the Empire, besieged with problems of their own, lived a life apart from the opulence of the great city of Constantinople. In these frontier borders, the Empire was under constant attack and the army regularly engaged the enemy in fierce battles in order to restore order. Dissatisfaction with the Emperor, especially with his collection of taxes, rarely benefited local frontier communities, and support for the local army created an affinity for a religious culture particular to a frontier community.

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<sup>8</sup> This distinction became known as a revealing action of a true Christian community.

Over time, some frontier communities of the Empire attempted to become even more politically separated. They developed their own hybrid society.<sup>9</sup> As this occurred, the heresy of Arianism developed into a religious faction completely disregarding the discipline of any Church Council. Thus, it was that the heresy became a sect. It did not start as a separate religious practice (Berndt, 2014).

Another Council was convened just over 50 years later in Constantinople. Among other things, the nature of the Holy Spirit was in controversy. Again, an issue had arisen from within the Christian community and not from a separate religious sect. Between much drama and intrigue, a group, under the leader of Macedonius, gained notoriety concerning attributes of the Holy Spirit. It was the doctrine of the Macedonians, as they later became known, that the Holy Spirit was simply a creature of Christ. This doctrine was addressed in the First Council of Constantinople. Further discernment became moot as many of the followers of Macedonius disbanded soon after the declaration of heresy. However, the doctrine of Macedonius did not develop into a faction until after his death in 380. The sect did not enjoy the popular recognition of society mainly because Macedonius himself had killed, imprisoned, tortured and then forced baptism on people during his short tenure as Bishop of Constantinople (Hanson, 1988, p. 818).

By 400 the persistence of heresies seemed intolerable to the now Christianized Empire. In the year 405, the Emperor Honorius took it upon himself to resolve matters with his “Edict of Union” attempting to unite the Donatists and Manichaeans into the universal Church. After the Emperor witnessed the physical abuse of the Donatists against a local Bishop, he

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<sup>9</sup> Barcelona, Toledo, Summa and Lugo are examples of Arian cities of the period. (Berndt, 2014).

immediately issued a law for union on February 12, 405. The law imposed punishment on any Donatists who did not rejoin the universal Church and accept a singular baptism. The rejection by some Donatists gave rise to even more violence. In turn, the Emperor insisted that, “We will hear no more of the Manichees or Donatists, who, we are informed, cease not from their madness: There shall be but one religion, the catholic” (Fleury, 1842, p. 130).

There were legal reasons not to immediately declare heretical groups as separate religious sects. Heretics, such as the Donatists, were classified not as members of a sect. If that were the case, they would have enjoyed the Emperor’s law protecting religious diversity in the empire. Rather, they were labeled as heretics, guilty of sacrilege within the Christian religion and could thus be disciplined within the Church (Kidd, 1922, p. 15).

The Council of Ephesus addressed the divisive controversy of the Nestorians in the year 431. As a consequence of this particular counsel, there arose a new Christology in the year 433. Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch reconciled the differences in their theology with the formulation of the hypostatic union dealing with the incarnation of Jesus. This refined understanding of the nature Jesus was later challenged by the Monophysite theology that purported Jesus to be having a singular divine nature and no human will at all. This starkly contrasted with the work formulated by Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch and proved to be politically and socially divisive (Ayer, 1939, p. 420).

The Monophysite controversy could have developed into a full religious sect with high profile leaders professing this theology. Addressing it as a heresy allowed the matter to be resolved internally and provided for the conversion or the anathema of its leaders. This strategy also allowed for the working of the Holy Spirit in the context of a council avoiding the emotional distractions that often accompanied these controversies (Ayer, 1939, p. 522).

The Council of Chalcedon in 451 indirectly failed to maintain ecumenical unity. The Council of Chalcedon was convened to address Christological issues as well as several administrative problems. In this case, however, the break did not occur from a sharp theological difference, as was the case with heresies that were discussed in previous councils. Rather, the lack of agreement, which dealt with the subtle understanding of the nature of Jesus, failed at gaining an internal consensus among the council members. Addressing the divinity and humanity of Jesus, the majority of the Council formerly rejected the resurging Monophysite theology for which the Emperor Theodosius had originally called the Council to resolve (Davis, 1990, p. 174). In discussing the reason for this condemnation, a deeper Christological issue arose. The Oriental Churches kept a direct interpretation of Cyril of Alexandria's language, while the majority found in Cyril a formula with a slightly different nuance, allowing for a dual nature in Christ (Davis, 1990, p. 182).<sup>10</sup>

Just over 170 years after the Council of Chalcedon, Mohammed established the religion of Islam. This would forever change the geopolitical structure of the Middle East (and complicated communications with the Oriental Orthodox Church). Some 600 years after the First Council of Jerusalem, attended by the original Apostles, the whole political, social, and religious landscape of the world had changed. Several Church councils had occurred down

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<sup>10</sup> The resulting creed was never accepted by several Oriental Orthodox Churches, including the Coptic Churches of Egypt and Ethiopia. It generated the first large division within the Church that was not based on a rejection of irreconcilable heresy. The division was the result in believing that the specific response to a particular heresy was inappropriate and that a special theological interpretation was unwarranted. The Oriental Orthodox Church continued to enjoy a fellowship with the Church in Rome. Indeed, both sides have worked down through the ages towards reconciling their differences.

through the years addressing resurging heresies and new issues. The Roman Pontiff had asserted himself in Church matters both East and West and would become a political authority with the establishment of the Papal States.

As the Western Roman Empire fell, feudalism took its place. Attempting to regain the unity of ancient Rome, a new Holy Roman Empire was formulated. The Fall Constantinople would not occur until 1453. In the interim, the West carried on with attempts to restore a Roman-like order. The Donation of Pepin occurred in 756 setting the stage for Charlemagne's coronation as Emperor in the year 880. His successor, Otto I, was crowned in 960. He eradicated all the Byzantine claims of the East by asserting that he was the true successor to the universal Roman Emperor. This, of course, created resentment on the part of the East (Gilles, 1986).

It was during this time that Scandinavian invaders, who had settled in what became known as the Norman District of France, began to expand their influence. Eventually, they marched into southern Italy dislodging both the Muslims and the Byzantines for the control Sicily. The Western Church had aligned itself, for a while, with the Normans who offered aid to the papacy. As the Normans pushed into Byzantine territory, the tensions between Rome and Constantinople worsened. Matters became complicated when the relationship between the Normans and the papacy deteriorated further as they seized papal lands. The Normans had ambitions that had become unacceptable to the papacy and they were condemned for their intrusion into the Papal States. In turn, the leaders of the Normans eventually imprisoned the Pope (Halecki, 1980, p. 41).

It was in this desperate political context that Pope Leo IX asked Cardinal Humbert to travel to Constantinople. Pope Leo IX was seeking the help of the East in his confrontation

with the Normans. Upon his arrival, Cardinal Humbert was not warmly welcomed due to the past insults of the West (Streeter, 2012, pp. 160-161). The Patriarch of Constantinople, Cerularius, was already angry at the previous Roman practices that he saw to be scandalous. With troubles mounting for the West, the Patriarch understood that the power of the papacy was possibly declining. Earlier, Rome had attempted to exercise authority over Constantinople with mixed results. Now, the East could exercise what it saw as its rightful place as the independent seat of the Church (Pelikan, 1983, p. 47).

Shortly after Cardinal Humbert arrived in Constantinople, Pope Leo IX died. The Cardinal knew he was on his own with questionable authority to negotiate with the East. Nonetheless, he took upon himself to retaliate for offenses against his person by publishing a list of grievances and attempted to assert authority in the name of the dead pope. The Patriarch responded by breaking off negotiations. In return, Cardinal Humbert wrote up a declaration of excommunication to the person of the Patriarch and on July 16, 1054, laid the document on the high altar of the Basilica of Hagia Sofia. The Patriarch responded by declaring the excommunication of Cardinal Humbert himself. It is significant that the cardinal had excommunicated only the patriarch and the patriarch only the cardinal. Nonetheless, later Christians took these as marking a break between East and West. The Great Schism had occurred (Pelikan, 1983).

It is interesting to note that the 'Great Schism' was not properly the result of an unreconciled heresy nor was it a full schism. While both sides cited practices that they felt to be irregular, neither gave canonical proof nor offered an opportunity for clarification and defense. The Cardinal had bantered around the city of Constantinople with the appearance of authority from a pope who was dead. This created the final intimidation of the Eastern



Patriarch. What turned out to be a jurisdictional skirmish was the basis for the schism that was later to give rise to claims of heresy on both sides (Pelikan, 1983).

The unity of the Church that had been so important to the early Christians seemed to have lasted for a little more than 1,000 years. While heresies had risen from the very beginning, many were dealt with by the councils of the Church and were eventually relegated to the status of a separate religious sect, not as part of the Christian community. In the end, it was the question of governance of the Church that was strained during this first millennium and remains so today after the Great Schism.

### **1.3 COUNCILS OF UNITY**

Previous sections presented the theme of retaining unity within the Church. While there were several heresies and schismatic forces working against this desired unity, it was in confraternity that union prevailed. This chapter will review a few selected councils of the Church as examples of the ecclesial work for unity and the ecumenical structures that promoted unity.

Within the ranks of the guardians of the faith, corrections to popular practices were applied by the councils of the Church. These attempts at correction by the Fathers of the Church sometimes later needed correction themselves.<sup>11</sup> Dogmatic unity was often maintained against larger number proponents who had attracted many away from the teachings of the Fathers as in the case of the Arians (McGoldrick, 2006, p. 87). This section

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<sup>11</sup> An example of this is the condemnation of the corrections of Pope Honorius I and Patriarch Sergius at the Third Council of Constantinople and their anathema confirmed by Pope Leo II (McGoldrick, 2006, p. 86).

will examine the defense of unity and the use of corrections employed by several councils. Our review in this section will be of only a few select Church councils with a focus on those councils that especially dealt with unity.

### 1.3.1 **The Council of Jerusalem**

The first Council of the Church is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Leading up to this Council we read about Paul's conversion (Acts 9), how he first addressed the Jews (Acts 9:20), and how designated people in Antioch sent Paul on his first mission to Cyprus (Acts 13:4). On this first mission, Paul initially approached the Jews (Acts 13:14) and then later spoke so that even the Gentiles heard the Good News (Acts 13:44-48). In Antioch, Paul entered into the debate with those wanting Mosaic practices to be applied to Gentile converts (Acts 13:25 – 15:2). Paul was sent by the Church in Antioch to Jerusalem for a council to address this ongoing debate (Acts 15:3).<sup>vi</sup>

Paul arrived in Jerusalem to meet with designated leaders about the matter (Acts 15:5-6). The apostolic and presbyteral assembly that he met with was seen as pillars of the community (Galatians 2:9). There ensued an open dialogue about the two specific matters at hand, the Jewish law regarding circumcision and the laws concerning dietary restrictions as they apply to Gentile converts (Acts 15:7). The debate comes to a definitive conclusion (Acts 15:28) with a plan on how to convey the council's resolution (Acts 15:22, 25). With the decisions of the Council of Jerusalem complete, Paul was sent with authorization, in writing, to announce that the Gentiles were not required to follow the Mosaic Law (Acts 15:22 - 29). Special attention was made so that the message of the Council should be addressed in pastoral terms (Acts 15: 28 – 29, Galatians 2:10).

While the Council of Jerusalem was called to define the application of Mosaic Law to the Gentile converts, it was also an attempt at promoting unity and peace among all the members as well (Acts 15:23-24).<sup>12</sup>

Councils of the Church through the ages have had similar formats as the Council of Jerusalem. Each council, a) addressed specific issues that were divisive of the Church, b) there was an assembly of reputable leaders, c) there was deliberation by the assembly concluding with at least a consensus if there was no unanimity, d) the direction by the Council was given in pastoral terms as well as dogmatic, and e) there was a call for unity by pointing out wrong dogma that was divisive with the assembly recommending corrections that would foster unity in the Church.<sup>13</sup> The Council of Jerusalem reported in Acts is a model for understanding of all future councils.

### 1.3.2 **The First Council of Nicaea**

The First Council of Nicaea is considered a church-wide (ecumenical) assembly. The Council in 325, was convened to address a specific crisis in the Church at the time. A crisis had arisen regarding an understanding of Christ as not having the same nature as God the Father. The adherence to this divergent dogma was known as the Arians.<sup>14</sup> Aside from addressing Arianism, Church leaders also took up disciplinary matters that they felt needed to

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<sup>12</sup> See: Acts 15:2, First Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:1, Romans 10:12, Galatians 2:9.

<sup>13</sup> All these elements were present in the Council of Jerusalem chapter 15.

<sup>14</sup> Named after Arius of Alexandria.

be formalized in order to keep harmony within the Church. They did not want to introduce new laws but rather address specific instances with a formal application (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 30).

At the time of the Council, the Arian sect was the majority of the leadership in the Christian community (McGoldrick, 2006, p. 87). The Council was attended, in person, by Arius and by his opponent, Athanasius. Nearly one sixth of all the bishops of the world attended (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 18). Eusebius of Caesarea declared the Council to be ecumenical (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 19).

While the Council meetings were very contentious, they did follow a predetermined agenda and had a high degree of formality about them (Davis, 1990, p. 56). Despite this ordering, the Council did not end with a unanimous vote. In fact, some eighteen of the bishops attending opposed the final outcome (Davis, 1990).<sup>15</sup>

At the end of the First Council of Nicaea, twenty canons were drawn up concerning such topics as ordination, hierarchical structures, status of clerics, the reception of lapsed Christians, and the manner in which dissidents were to be readmitted and liturgical practices (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 30). All these were written down and copies disseminated throughout the Church so all would know the decisions of the Council.

Originally, the Emperor, who had called for the Council, hoped that it would unify both the Empire and the Church. While the Arian division persisted and had periods of resurgence

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<sup>15</sup> The mere consensus to the decree of the First Council of Nicaea is an important precedent for all future Church councils and synods. Even without unanimous agreement, the precepts of this Council, and following councils, have laid the foundation for definitions of orthodoxy and heresy through the ages.

over time, the symbol of faith generated at the First Council of Nicaea (The Nicene Creed) was a unifying factor throughout Christendom at the time.

### 1.3.3 **The First Council of Constantinople**

The issue of the Arian influence in the Christian community persisted after the First Nicene Council. A second ecumenical Council was gathered in Constantinople in the year 381. The Creed proclaimed at the First Council of Nicaea simply said that the Church Fathers believed in the Holy Spirit but did not attribute divinity to the Holy Spirit. This lack of clarity was to be the focus topic of this first Council of Constantinople (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 102).<sup>16</sup>

At the time of the Council, the host city of Constantinople was predominantly Arian territory. Some 150 bishops attended. Those who spoke against the Arian beliefs were in the minority (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 103). Even with this disparity in ideological representation, several councils of the Church, starting with the Council of Chalcedon, the Fathers of the Church have declared that the first Council of Constantinople to be ecumenical (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 108).

At this Council there was a consensus regarding the basics of the First Nicene Creed. The Council members recognized that the original Creed needed to be augmented, but not changed. There were four principal canons that derived from this Council. The first canon was a reaffirmation of the beliefs of the Council of Nicaea. The other three canons dealt with

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<sup>16</sup> Clarification became the reason for the extra-councilor addition of the filioque in later years.

pronouncements on heresies. In addition to these canons there was also the affirmation of the divinity of the Holy Spirit and the unity of the Trinity (Davis, 1990, p. 126).

As with the First Council of Nicaea, the Emperor had convoked this Council in an effort to unify both the Christian religion and his own Empire. The Emperor in good faith was not willing to see divisions persist (Davis, 1990, p. 116). Dogmatic questions that had the potential of dividing communities needed to be addressed. Errors in dogma had arisen since that first Council and imitations of Arianism had resurfaced. There was to be no separation within the Church or the state. The unity of the Church benefited the Empire. There was a call for one Faith and one Empire (Davis, 1990, p. 130).

#### 1.3.4 **The Council of Ephesus**

Also convened by imperial decree (Emperor Theodosius II), the Council of Ephesus in 431 was to address challenges to the faith of the ancient Church Fathers.

This Council also confirmed the Nicene Creed. New challenges had arisen with the Church. The propositions of Nestorius of Constantinople regarding the Theotokes<sup>17</sup> and the hypostatic union were addressed at this Council. In his homeland of Egypt, Cyril had preached against what he considered the errors of Nestorius. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, challenged Nestorius at the Council. The disagreement between Cyril and Nestorius took on a vehement exhibition (Davis, 1990, p. 148). In the end, Cyril proved to be the undoing of Nestorius (Davis, 1990, p. 141).

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<sup>17</sup> Theotokos, Θεοτόκος, title of Mary as the "Mother of God."

The Council was able to come to a consensus and condemned Nestorius. The reaction was heated. Cyril in the end proposed a peaceful resolution to break down the wall of division that had arisen within the Church (Davis, 1990, p. 162). A formula of union was finally accomplished in the year 433. It contained a profession of faith that was acceptable to the two major opponents of Nestorius, John of Antioch and Cyril (Davis, 1990, pp. 162-163).

With Nestorius deposed, the Emperor was pleased that most Christians now had one creed and practiced one faith (despite the holdout of the Assyrian Church which eventually accepted the canons the Council of Ephesus in the year 1994).

#### 1.3.5 **The Council of Chalcedon**

A fourth ecumenical Council was called for in the year 451. Convened just 20 years after the Council of Ephesus, some matters had proven not to be completely settled. The Patriarch John of Antioch and Cyril of Alexandria had settled their differences under the guidance of Acacius the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. However, monophysitism (Christ having one nature and the question of the union of the divine and the human in Jesus) remained an unresolved controversy (Meyendorff, 1989, pp. 166-167).

Some 500 bishops convened to address dogmatic issues (Davis, 1990, p. 180). The Council began with the reading of the acts of the Council of Ephesus and continued with multiple sessions addressing details of dogma (Davis, 1990, p. 182). There was great dissension, especially among the Egyptian bishops (Davis, 1990, p. 184). Finally, a delegation of legates, including those from the Orientals and a commission from the West, worked on further defining the Creed. An augmented Creed was produced with the demand that it remains unchanged in the future. In this Council, the Creed of Nicaea was made the

singular symbol of Christian faith. The council's definition of faith ended with the strong admonition that, "it is unlawful for anyone to produce another faith, whether in writing, or composing, or holding, or teaching others" (Davis, 1990, p. 187). There were also further declarations regarding the primacy of the Bishop of "Old Rome" and the status of the Bishop of "New Rome." In the year 452, Emperor Marcian heralded the canons of this Council and called for all Christians to cease discussion of the matter (Davis, 1990, p. 191). Unity in the faith community had been restored according to the Emperor even though some in the Oriental Orthodox Churches abstained from agreement.

#### 1.3.6 **The Second Council of Constantinople**

Some 102 years after the First Council Constantinople, a second Council was undertaken in the year 553. To some, this is understood as the seventh and last ecumenical Council.

Monophysitism and Origenism (which posited the preexistence of the soul and held that there was reincarnation) were the issues at the fore of this second council in Constantinople.

The "Three Chapters" controversy involving the writings of Ibas of Edessa, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Cyrus were also of great concern. These three authors had taken to reiterating Nestorism with an extreme view that the nature of Christ was completely singular after the incarnation. Emperor Justinian himself had condemned these views and after debate so did the Council of bishops (Davis, 1990, p. 243).

The Council was attended by some 160 bishops, mostly from the Eastern Church (Davis, 1990, p. 241). There were multiple sessions addressing several disciplinary, as well as dogmatic, issues. Altogether there were 14 anathemas issued by this Council. In the end,



there was a consensus among the bishops with only a few objections (Davis, 1990, pp. 212-214).

With this Council, Emperor Justinian worked to reconcile the differences in the Church to bring about unity within the religion and, of course, within the Empire. The Second Council of Constantinople began the work to end the ‘Three Chapters’ schism. The Second Council of Constantinople was a major achievement (with the exception of the Churches of Egypt and Syria remaining un-reconciled). The final union was achieved in the year 687 under Pope Sergius I (Davis, 1990, p. 253).

#### 1.3.7 **The Third Council of Constantinople**

In the years 680 through 681, another council was held in Constantinople to address continuing challenges to the faith. Monothelitism had been brought back into the mainstream of Christian culture in the expansion of the Empire by its military conquests and the reabsorption of areas previously held by the Persians (Davis, 1990, pp. 268-271). Previous councils had addressed this resurging heresy. Once again, the Emperor convoked the Council. Because it was addressing previously resolved issues, only 37 Bishops showed up at first. However, as the debates continued, 150 bishops attended by the year 681 (Davis, 1990, pp. 279-284). This particular council focused on the application of traditions and not on introducing new dogmatic principles in justifying the previous doctrines regarding the nature of Christ. The Council largely reconfirmed previous definitions of faith (Meyendorff, 1989, pp. 371-372).

The Third Council of Constantinople reestablished the uniformity of faith. The relationship between the Emperor and the Pope was also strengthened by a series of unrelated political events (Davis, 1990, p. 287).

#### 1.3.8 **The Second Council of Lyons**

In the year 1274, a second Council in the town of Lyons was convened. The Emperor Michael VIII had made a pledge to unite the Church (Papadakis, 1983, p. 208). This effort of the Emperor coincided with Pope Gregory X's own agenda for reuniting with the Eastern Church and reforming the Western clergy (Rollo-Koster, 2008, p. 95).

The focus of the Council was Church unity (Papadakis, 1983, p. 209). Decades before this Council, the Pope, the Emperor, and the Patriarch of Constantinople had all called for a joint Council to address the issue of past schisms and profess unity (Papadakis, 1983, p. 210). It was to be a Council of unity based on the free acceptance of a common faith and not forced by coercion (Papadakis, 1983, p. 212). From the beginning, the Byzantine Church asked that the format of the Council be the same as the traditional methods in the past and truly be ecumenical (Papadakis, 1983, p. 212). The West accepted this format and welcomed the full participation by the Eastern Church as a visible sign that the Council was ecumenical (Papadakis, 1983, p. 213).

Within this format of ecumenism, the Council gave Church leaders the opportunity to discuss openly the issues of communion with the Greeks, the filioque<sup>18</sup> and complete union

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<sup>18</sup> Meaning "and the Son." A formula inserted into the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed to further the creed's defense against the Arians and Monothelites.

of all the Christian Churches (Papadakis, 1983, p. 211). While there were those who abstained from the Council and did not consent to its decrees, there were nonetheless sufficient participants to affect a consensus (Papadakis, 1983, p. 212). Although there were other matters discussed, the Second Council of Lyons is best known for its proclamation of union. There were those who recanted their assent and suspected the ecumenism of the Council. However, it was a public display of a formal effort to reestablish unity within the Church and proclaim such unity as the preferred natural state of the Church. The only dogma proclaimed at this Council was that of the filioque (Papadakis, 1983, p. 215).

#### 1.3.9 **The Council of Florence**

In the year 1439, a more aggressive Council that focused on unity in the Church took place in Italy. The Council had been moved to the city of Florence because the original host city of Basel had been decimated by the plague. There had been some 20 years of preparation for this Council (Ostroumov, 1861, p. 2). As in the Second Council of Lyons, Pope Gregory X welcomed the Emperor Michael VIII's gesture for union and even extended practical help so that the Eastern Church could attend (Ostroumov, 1861, pp. 13-14). Emperor Manuel Palaeologus had an immediate interest in the unification of the Church. His empire was set upon by the Turks and he believed that a religious cohesion of the Eastern and Western Churches would afford him the political unity he needed to repel the attacks of Sultan's armies (Ostroumov, 1861, p. 18).

The Emperor linked the unity of the Church to the unity of all militant Christianity (Ostroumov, 1861, p. 15). Old issues, such as the filioque, could be re-addressed as it had become confused some 164 years after the Second Council of Lyons. In particular, the

filioque was to be presented with the new concept of translating the meaning of the text of the Creed and not just a literal translation of a word for a word (Hamerman, 1992, pp. 26, 113).

Despite the inability of the Pope to attend, the papal legates were recognized as speaking on behalf of the Pope and all the Western Church. The Emperor made sure that representatives of the Eastern Church were present. Discussions between these groups were encouraged by an agenda that allowed scholars to work with the leaders of the Church and make formal public declarations (Ostroumov, 1861, p. 27). All were given an opportunity to speak their mind. Silence during the Council was understood as not only agreeing with the findings of the Council, but also as not having any rebuttal to the council's proposals (Ostroumov, 1861, pp. 106-107).<sup>19</sup> The method of reconciling opposing viewpoints was painstakingly done so that there remained no doubt as to the meaning of the Council's decisions (Ostroumov, 1861, p. 125). The Latin speaking church members especially made every effort to explain their proposals including formal presentations in the Greek language (Ostroumov, 1861, pp. 126-127).

The directions of the Council were put into detailed writing so that all would have a clear understanding of what was proposed (Ostroumov, 1861, p. 143). After the conclusion of the Council, all were seen as freely agreeing to the document acknowledging its scriptural basis and that they were not coerced into agreement (Ostroumov, 1861, p. 139).

In the end, the document of union was signed by 115 Latin bishops and 33 Greek bishops. While the Patriarch of Constantinople died just days before the signing of the document by

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<sup>19</sup> The silence of Mark of Ephesus was a significant factor in the acceptance of the Council's decisions. [pages 107, 125] (Ostroumov, 1861).

the others, his successor did later agree to the union. It was only Mark of Ephesus whose signature was absent from the document (Ostroumov, 1861, p. 117). The finished document was heralded as creating peace for the Churches, East and West (Ostroumov, 1861, p. 146). It was not until 1484 that some in the Eastern Churches repudiated the actions they had taken at the Council Florence.

#### **1.4 EFFECTS OF HERESIES**

The early Church saw its identity arise out of conflict. Not only did the early persecutions influence the character of the Church overall, heterodoxies also affected what it meant to be a Christian.<sup>20</sup>

In exploring the self-identity of early Christians, we might do well to consider that Christianity did not develop simply as the historic victor among competing norms.<sup>21</sup> Our focus in this research is not the dogmatic principles that defined Christian spiritual beliefs (and who the victors were). Rather, we are observing a persistent desire for unity among many in the Christian community. This unity gave strength to the community and allowed the

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<sup>20</sup> For a further discussion on heterodoxy and its role in the development of the Christian community see: “Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy: Exploring Belief Systems through the Lens of the Ancient Christian Faith” by Fr. Andrew Stephan Damick. Also, the well-known “Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity” by Walter Bauer (Bauer, 1971).

<sup>21</sup> A new exploration of how Christianity is not the result of competing groups can be found in the collections of essays, “Orthodoxy and Heresy in Early Christian Context: Reconsidering the Bauer Thesis” edited by Paul A Hartog.

religion to flourish. Even the most “unorthodox” Christian could be seen as understanding that it was not good to gravitate away from the community as a whole. This section presents several instances of that understanding.

One of the greater schisms in the early Church involved Deacon Felicissimus. Installed as a deacon during the absence of Bishop Cyprian of Carthage, Felicissimus believed that many were not stringent enough and harsh punishment was needed for those who had lapsed during the persecutions. Bishop Cyprian, upon his return, formed a synod to handle the affair (Gilles, 1984, p. 112). Felicissimus was removed from any involvement in the matter. Felicissimus for his part protested and was especially irate about being removed from his authority over the Church treasury that was now to give aid to the lapsed. The deacon gathered a party of supporters and declared these people to be the true Christians of Carthage. Several years later, he went to Rome seeking confirmation of his group. Pope Cornelius heard his petition but denied that recognition and, in the year, 251 confirmed the actions of Bishop Cyprian.<sup>22</sup> The schism died out and unity under the bishop prevailed.

It was in Antioch that followers of the Nazarene were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). This term was a recognition that this local Church was in unity with such believers in other places. Later, there arose heretics teaching a divergent dogma, such as Nestorius and Arius. These gave occasions for formal proclamations of orthodoxy that further unified Christians. The Christian community coalesced around these proclamations. Those who persisted in heresy fell into schism by their refusal to remain within the community.

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<sup>22</sup> For more details on the Felicissimus Schism see, “An Original Draught on the Primitive Church” W. Slater (page 25 – 27).

Despite schisms, there were constant attempts at reunification. Several emperors worked diligently to rejoin separated Churches using their secular influence. Constantine, Justinian, Michael VIII, and John VIII are among the more notable emperors who attempted reunification. There were secular motivations for their endeavors that were a mix of political expediency and religious convictions. The motivation for their intervention was not just that a united religion better facilitated a united empire. Rome had been a mixed religious community before the dawn of Christianity with a mixed history of success. The emperors also saw themselves as stewards of the Church. The responsibility for keeping cohesion within the Church community was assumed by the emperor as part of his authority over religion as Pontifex Maximus. That title was eventually surrendered by Emperor Gratian who bestowed it on to the Bishop of Rome in 382.<sup>23</sup>

The early Church saw in unity a confirmation of the divine nature of their religion. Unity did not just define a core grouping; unity was the mark of the true Church.

This unity was an identity transcending ethnic or geographic attributes. Christianity developed throughout the known world. It was neither a cultural dominance nor an economic colonization. Christianity was a religion so fundamental in its message of love and so universal in its appeal, that conversion required faith not impersonation. In return for a life of faith, there was the promise of a transfiguration, a changed person and society.

The appeal of Christianity was jeopardized by schism, a movement away from the Christian community. Councils of the Church focused on retaining unity not by splintering

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<sup>23</sup> A detailed description of this can be found in the article, "The Altar of Victory, Paganism's Last Battle." by J.J. Sheridan, *L'Atiquite Classique*, Vol 35, 1966, P 187.

the core community based on allegiance or dogmatic nuances. Those who had been formally designated as heretics or in schism were simply seen as no longer members in communion with the Christian community.

Unity was a singular, far-reaching concept of the Christian community. It was upheld most eloquently first at the Council of Nicaea. This ecumenical Council of diverse political and ethnic groups proclaimed the Church as one universal mystical body (the body of Christ).

Constantine called for the Council in Nicaea in 325 to solve the internal divisions that had arisen in Christianity. The Council did not impose new dogma. Rather, it upheld an understanding of the nature of Jesus found to be common within the Church and properly revealed in the proceedings of the Synod.

The Council imposed condemnation upon Arius as an exercise of its authority to affirm unity. In generating a symbol of faith in the Nicene Creed, the Council did not impose new dogma. Archbishop Peter L'Huillier portrays the Council of Nicaea as working to preserve the already expressed faith that the Arians attempted to usurp (L'Huillier, 1996, p. 30). This attempt to appropriate the faith is suggested by those that hold that the creedal statement was not the work of this council, but rather that the council simply ratified an older creed expressed by Cyril of Jerusalem to clear himself of charges that he was an Arian (Davis, 1990, p. 121). J. N. D. Kelly asserts that it was Constantine's desire to re-establish the existing doctrinal heritage (Kelly, 1978, p. 231). Anthony Gilles makes a similar argument, stating the Council expressed the Church's long held traditional beliefs (Gilles, 1984, p. 64). The symbol of faith proclaimed in Nicaea formally showed to all the true nature of the existing Church and, indirectly, the differentiation from the Church community that was heresy. Those who continued to adhere to the condemned heresy were by default in schism.



We notice in the Councils that the Church was not evolving new doctrine nor transforming into a new community. Rather, the Councils understood their task as revealing doctrine more clearly to contrast against divergent interlopers. The Church was not improving itself; it was revealing its mission during conflict.<sup>24</sup>

The unity of the Church was seen as universal. Union with the Mystical Body of Christ was recognized by the acceptance of the symbols of faith. The Felicissimus Schism had the major elements found in subsequent threats to union within the Church. This schism protested authority and did not necessarily grow out of a dogmatic difference. The rupture did not start as a distinct separate assembly but rather coalesced into its own group (Sclater, 1717, p. 285). After the followers of Felicissimus discovered that they were in contention with the local Church, they sought ecclesial recognition from the universal Church (Sclater, 1717, p. 286). The universal Church subsequently did recognize the Felicissimus movement and declared his followers as a schismatic group separated from their lawful pastor (Sclater, 1717, p. 280).

Emperor Zeno of Constantinople instigated the Acacian schism in 474. Zeno attempted to reconcile the rebellious Monophysites with those who had endorse its condemnation at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The Emperor required Acacias, the patriarch of Constantinople, to write a letter meant to appease everyone involved in the Monophysite controversy. The letter, known as the Henoticon (meaning in Greek ‘Edict of Union’), deliberately ignored the findings of Chalcedon and referred to the controversial nature of Christ in ambiguous terms (Ayer, 1939, p. 527). Published in 482, the Henoticon was rejected by Rome and most

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<sup>24</sup> This spirit of the Councils can be found in, “The Letter of Eusebius of Caesarea to the People of His Diocese” by Eusebius (Wace, 1892).

Eastern bishops for what it failed to state regarding the nature of Christ. Even extreme Monophysites rejected the proposal for not fully supporting their contentions (Ayer, 1939, p. 523).

Acacius was later deposed in 484 causing a division between the East and the West and even within the Eastern Churches. It was not until the year 519 that reunion was achieved after a series of new emperors and new patriarchs. The Formula of Hormisdas promoted by the Bishop of Rome was the formal document that ended the Acacian schism. There was more to this formula than the simple condemnation of the Monophysite heresy and rejection of the Henoticon written by Acacius. It also contained unambiguous statements declaring that the signatories accepted the authority and teaching of the Bishop of Rome (“Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram ædificabo ecclesiam meam”) (Fortescue, 1955, p. 15). The formula was signed by the bishops of Illyricum, Greece and by the Patriarch of Constantinople, plus most other Eastern bishops (it has never been recanted by either the East or West). It was incorporated 300 years later in the Fourth Council of Constantinople (869) and was even brought up for attention over a thousand years later at Vatican I in the year 1870 (Ayer, 1939, p. 671).

The Christian Church of Peter and Paul was Roman with a Roman culture. In Roman society, strength was derived by unity and this understanding was deep in the Roman culture. Clement I's writing about the situation in the early Church community within Rome emphasized order. His model for the wealthy Christians was based on the Roman understanding that the wealthy should be good patrons of the poor. Likewise, the model for the poor was that they should be good clients (e.g. manumitted) [location 1587] (Jeffers, 1991). All were to live in unity, each having their own role in society.

Roman citizenship was something that could be gained outside of one's ethnic heritage. Some freed slaves of all ethnic groups were given Roman citizenship as part of their freedom. As part of that Roman citizenship, it was the duty of each to do good for the entire Roman population. Concord and peace were the ideal good that a Roman citizen sought [Loc1597] (Jeffers, 1991).

Clement I<sup>vii</sup> emulated this Roman structure proclaiming the Church organization should be centered on unity. Unity was seen as important for harmony within the Church [Loc1605] (Jeffers, 1991). For the citizen of Rome saw unity and peace as bringing prosperity to their lives [Loc1515] (Jeffers, 1991). Similarly, Clement I promoted peace within the Church in order to establish prosperity in its mission. The Romans knew that one of the great weaknesses of Greece was its constant civil wars. Romans themselves suffered many civil wars and saw these as great evils to their personal prosperity and as a cancer to their culture.

Any lack of unity threatened the very foundations of Rome. It was often with a strong hand that emperors opposed dissension. This strong handedness, often referred to as 'Pax Romana,' both imposed Roman order and did battle with disunity. In this dynamic call for unity within the Empire, Pax Romana was not simply the quenching of dissident voices. Rather, the typical Roman saw it as both the imposition of concord and necessary for prosperity. Moreover, this prosperity was not just limited to the city of Rome.

The Empire saw itself as the benefactor to the entire world. The same universalism and invocation to harmony can be seen in the early Church [Loc1510] (Jeffers, 1991). So strong was Clement I's feeling that unity begot peace and that unity came from obedience that "the Christian community will remain in peace and all obey God, the Master, by remaining in submission to the congregation's leaders" [Loc1523] (Jeffers, 1991). For Clement I the "most

grievous error is for the average Christian to rebel against the authority of the appointed leaders” [Loc152] (Jeffers, 1991). As exemplified in his dealings with the rebellious Corinthians, Clement I sought to retain harmony by calling for unity with existing leadership rather than correcting or replacing errant Church leaders.

Augustine of Hippo also preferred unity as the first call of action when the virtue of leaders was in question. Augustine stated that if any action retains unity, even if there is evil present, members should withhold their rebellion at first [Chp 15 ~16] (King, 1870). Augustine points out that the apostle Paul distained division caused by heretics and schismatics [Chp 12 ~18] (King, 1870). In his statements, Augustine seeks to prioritize unity over the complete eradication of evil. While Augustine recognizes that evils, especially heresies, are detrimental to the Christian community, discord is not just repugnant but also of greater concern in that it deteriorates the blessings of the sacramental mysteries and removes the people from communion with Church leaders and their fellow Christians. In exhorting dissenters, such as Optatus, Augustine speaks in the strongest terms that “there is therefore no reason why you should perish in such sin of separation and such sacrilege of schism” [Chp 23 ~ 55] (King, 1870).

Another reason why Augustine sees that unity was so important in the Church is that Christianity is a unique religion and its unity strengthens it. Reverend King, in his discussion of Augustine versus Manichaeism, emphasized that the Christian religion uniquely harmonizes theology, cosmology, anthropology and eschatology [Chp 8 ~1] (King, 1870). For Augustine, Manichaeism is simply not Christian and therefore not in union with the Christian community. This lack of union was a derivative indication that Manichaeism was a separate religion.

For Augustine, any evil found in the Church community, such as Manichaeism, was not cause for their separation from that community. “Charity would compel you, even if you knew of any evils within the Church, I do not say to consent to them, but yet to tolerate them if you could not prevent them, lest, on account of the wicked who are to be separated by the winnowing-fan at the last day, you should at the present time sever the bond of peace by breaking off from the society of good men” [Chp 1~2] (King, 1870). Augustine reminded his reader of the Gospel passage to let both the wheat and the weeds grow together until harvest (Matthew 13:30).

The Donatists, according to Augustine, had the understanding that the Church could never contain sinners. For the Donatist, churches that contained sinners, or were occasions of sin, were not truly the Church of Christ (Kelly, 2006, p. 2). Augustine, on the other hand, believed that the Church should consist of sinners and of the righteous.

“Augustine, rather, saw the Church as the locus for salvation and for repentance. The sinner is welcomed into the church so that he may proceed to become a faithful and completely repentant Christian. The role of the Christian community is to provide a place for spiritual and personal growth in Christ. Augustine therefore envisions a church where the Christians help each other to be virtuous and where the Christians pray for each other. He calls this communion a Communion of Sacraments or *Communio Sacramentorum*” (Kelly, 2006, p. 5).

In Augustine’s sermon 313, he says, “It was Judas himself who separated himself from the Lord. He was tolerated to the very end; he gave the kiss of peace, though he did not have peace in his heart .... So, in tolerating him to the very end, the Lord Jesus Christ forcefully

insisted that separations are not to be made, that unity is to be cherished and peace preserved” (Augustine sermon 313E, 3 (Kelly, 2006, p. 7)).

For both Clement I and for Augustine the blessing of peace in Christianity came through the unity of the Church. The Roman Empire placed unity as the instrument for harmony and peace in the community. In the Church, peace was not from dogmatic purity. Peace was the sign of grace being present. For the Romans, the spirit of peace came from cultural dominance and hegemony. For Christians, Christ was the cause of the singular source of peace. The Pax Romana started after the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. This defeat of Marc Antony squelched the prospects of civil war in the Empire. It brought social peace and economic prosperity for almost 200 years to the citizens of Rome. This worldwide peace was not so much the absence of war, as it was the total subjection of all opponents. Peace thrived when the opponents to unity were subdued. For Christians, worldwide peace was achieved by Jesus’ triumph over death in His resurrection. As witnessed by the martyrs, Christianity did not bring the benefits of social harmony nor material wealth. Rather, the benefits of Christian peace brought about unity within the Church and the blessings of spiritual salvation. Christianity did not need to impose a separate regiment of peaceful behavior, but rather saw itself as giving an example of harmony and love that are naturally universal to all humans. <sup>viii</sup>

The early ecumenical councils of the church addressed issues of unity. This call for unity was especially strong in the first four ecumenical councils.

The Council of Nicaea in 325 called for unity in the celebration of Pasha (Easter) (L’Huiller, 1996, p. 23). This Council called for unity in both its condemnation of Arianism and in practice in the worldwide celebration of the Resurrection. It called for an end to the rigorist practices that had arisen. Meletius had caused a schism in his dealings with lapsed

Christians (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 27). This schism involved with disciplinary matters not doctrinal (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 30).

The First Council of Constantinople in 381 addressed persistent heresies. Canon 7 outlined ways to receive heretics back into union with the Church (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 111). Zeno's Edict of Union in 433 was an attempt to build on this legacy of the Council. The Henotikan addressed the Acacian schism and the Monophysite schismatic heresy in a method that focused on reunion rather than separation (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 168).

The Council of Ephesus in 431 condemned the heresy of the Nestorians and confirmed the Nicaea symbol (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 194). The Formula of Union in 433 brought about the reunion of those following Cyril and those who were loyal to John of Antioch. The resulting peace laid the foundation for the reunion (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 194).

The Council of Chalcedon in 451 defined the two natures of Christ as a hypostasis. While the Oriental churches, especially the Coptics, did not accept this dogmatic definition, there was a re-emphasis on religious unity among Christians in that there was to be no other symbol of unifying faith than that expressed in Nicaea (L'Huiller, 1996, p. 299).

The very fact that many councils were invoked because of the schismatic effect of heresies indicates that maintaining unity was an ongoing concern. It was common for those accused of being "unorthodox" to defend themselves. In these cases, the dissenter did not simply break away from the community nor were they summarily shunned. Rather, they were given the opportunity to defend themselves, repent (if need be) and in most cases told that their actions were a serious transgression of ecclesial unity. In addition, many who were called to such a defense saw it as an opportunity to preach what they understood to be correct in the hope that the others would agree or at least join them in unity.

## 1.5 TRENT TO TODAY

Previous sections gave an account of the concept of unity. The goal of unity in many ways emulated the ancient Roman culture and political system that promoted unity as a major strength in the Empire. Unity did not call for an elimination of diverse cultures and tribes. Rather, unity was a bond of relationship among diverse peoples.

Unity as a relationship has been seen as one of the marks of true Christianity [Loc1515] (Jeffers, 1991). The similarity of different Christian communities in their religious practice, social charity and governance was how the non-Christian world at the time recognized this sect (Antioch, Acts 11:26). Unity is not just what the Church is called to; it is a recognition of the essence of the Church.

When heterodoxy entered into a Christian community, it threatened the unity of not just dogma but also of community. Early Church Fathers contested these divisive dogmas pronouncing them heresies. Often the contentions that arose generated schisms not only within local church communities, but also throughout Christendom worldwide.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Major Schisms in the early Church that spread throughout the whole Church include: The Circumcisers (1<sup>st</sup> Century, Acts 15:1), Gnosticism (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Centuries), Monotanism (late 2<sup>nd</sup> Century), Sabellianism (early 3<sup>rd</sup> Century), Pelagianism (5<sup>th</sup> Century), Semi-Pelagianism (5<sup>th</sup> Century), Nestorianism (5<sup>th</sup> Century), Monophysitism (5<sup>th</sup> Century) and Iconoclasm (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Centuries).



There were also occasions of schisms arising out of disputed governance and disobedience to the local bishop.<sup>26</sup> Just as in the case of heresies, the reactions of the Church Fathers became foundational to what it meant to be the Christian Church. The pastoral response to insubordination was not only instances of charity, but also examples of how Christians retained unity. Rather than a belligerent '*Pax Romana*,' Christian leaders extended peace to the wayward and made every effort to welcome them back into the community.<sup>27</sup>

Over hundreds of years, councils and local synods were called to address issues of faith, dogma, heresy and schism. These meetings formalized what it meant to be a Christian and in unity with other Churches. Christians in various geographic locations began to understand in these formal testaments the universality among communities. The understanding of what it meant to be a Christian Church extended to the relationship of the local community to other Christian communities. It also involved how these geographic churches functioned as one Christian Church worldwide. In this, Christianity did not completely emulate the political model of the Roman Empire. Councils of the Church and local synods understood that they were inspired by the Holy Spirit and led by collegiality together in recognition of the authority of the Church. Christian governance was not a top-down political system.

Perhaps the preeminent of all the councils of the early Church was the seventh ecumenical council, at Nicaea for the second time in 787. For the Roman Church, however,

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<sup>26</sup> Two major examples are: Felicissimusism and the Acacian Schism.

<sup>27</sup> Examples include: Sylvester, Bishop of Rome during Nicaea I, Augustine of Hippo, and Cyprian of Carthage.

there was later the culminating Council of Trent, which stands as the amalgamation and defense of the traditions of the Church with the scriptural foundations for Christian norms.

Trent methodically defined Christianity in a manner that Western cultures could understand. Its emphasis was on clearly stating dogma and not pastoral concerns. This method of asserting Christian truths unified the Western Church all the way through to the First Council.

Even though the Council of Vatican I was interrupted (on September 20, 1870, Pope Pius IX, issued the bull “*Postquam Dei munere*”, adjourning the council indefinitely. With the opening of Vatican II in 1962, Vatican I was closed by implication) (Washburn, 2019, p. chp 37), it did manage to make several important dogmatic decrees. These decrees stand in sharp contrast to what happened in Vatican II with its emphasis on pastoral concerns and avoidance of dogmatic pronouncements.

What immediately led up to Vatican II is perhaps as important as what came out of the Council. Angelo Roncalli, who became Pope John XXIII on October 28, 1958, was the man who called for Vatican II. One of 14 children of a peasant farmer in northern Italy, he served in the Italian Army and later became a chaplain during World War I. In 1934, he was assigned as the Apostolic delegate for the Turkish and Greek Catholics. He not only learned the local language, but he also encouraged its use in liturgical ceremonies. His experience in the near East gave him firsthand knowledge of the non-Roman Church. This would create a sensitivity and affinity for the Orthodox. Because of this, Pope John XXIII was successful in welcoming representatives of the East to a Vatican Council. Having experienced the devastation of two world wars, Pope John XXIII knew the need to rebuild not only European civilization but to rebuild the Western Church. In 1954, he was assigned as the patriarch of

Venice. He liked this assignment with its pastoral duties. However, his talents were recognized during the electoral conclave in 1958, and he was elected as the Bishop of Rome.<sup>28</sup>

As Pope, he knew that he needed to do more than rebuild the Church. He also understood that he needed to reanimate Christianity. Simply reinstituting centuries old dogmatic proclamations would not suffice in the new age the world found itself. Formal atheism had been installed in major parts of the world including Russia, Eastern Europe and China. The dangers of modernism affected not only popular culture, but also the Church itself. These dangers had been addressed by his predecessor.<sup>29</sup> John XXIII understood that the Church had gained a maturity since Trent. The Council of Trent reiterated traditions, give dissenters a clearer distinction of separation from Rome. Now the Church needed to develop its pastoral message of faith in action. The emphasis now, he understood, was not what Christians needed to avoid but what Christians needed to do in order to fulfill the commandment to love one another.

As a prelude to the ecumenism of Vatican II, we should keep in mind some of the events taking place just prior to the Council. Pope Pius XI issued an encyclical on religious unity in 1928.<sup>30</sup> The context for this encyclical was a world very much involved in religious matters, specifically anti-religious movements such as Communism and the beginning of Fascism.

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<sup>28</sup> For more about the life of Pope John XXIII, I recommend: "The Good Pope" by Greg Tobin, Harper Colens, NY, 2012.

<sup>29</sup> See: "Mortalium Animos" an Encyclical of Pope Pius XI, 1928.

<sup>30</sup> See: "Mortalium Animos" an Encyclical of Pope Pius XI, 1928.

World War I had ended only 10 years prior and the next decade would see the start of World War II. In 1927, there arose the Cristero War in Mexico in which the government violently persecuted the Roman Catholic Church with many clergy and laity being executed for their faith by the government. That same year, Stalin came to power in Russia and the Communists Army arose in China. Albania attacked Yugoslavia and technology had made instantaneous communications even more possible with transatlantic radio broadcasting and the establishment of the first television broadcasts.

*Mortalium Animos* was an encyclical taking a strong stance against certain movements that promoted religious disunity. There had arisen the concept that all religions are equally good and praiseworthy and that Christianity had no special significance in comparison to any other religion [Loc19] (Pope Pius XI, 1928). Certain proponents of Pan-Christianity called for all Christians to be one [Loc31] (Pope Pius XI, 1928). According to them, there is no specific visible church, only a federation of various communities of Christians [Loc54] (Pope Pius XI, 1928). There was a call for a sort of universal federation of Christians based on whatever faith elements these communities held in common. Unlike the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics who understood there to be no interruption in the visible presence of Christ in His Church through the ages, there were groups that understood that unity had been lost since the Apostolic Age and remained only as an ideal through the ages [Loc72] (Pope Pius XI, 1928). The encyclical strongly objected to this particular sort of effort at unity among Christians stating that “the Disciples of Christ must be united principally by the bond of one faith” [Loc118] (Pope Pius XI, 1928). The encyclical hinges on the call for Christian unity on the totality of faith as being the foundation for communion.

This rejection to the call for a federation of Christian communities became a point for schism after Vatican II when it was interpreted by some as rejecting any sort of ecumenism. The period just before Vatican II also saw the Church addressing the concepts of several non-Catholic philosophers. Among these were Kant, Nietzsche (work was foundational to Transcendentalism), and Husserl (work was foundational to Phenomenological Theory). Their philosophies stood in stark contrast to the philosophies of ancient Greece and Rome, the Early Fathers of the Church and the great thinkers of the Middle Ages. The Church found that it needed to address many of the issues that were brought up by philosophers of the Enlightenment and of the Modern Era.

Pope John XXIII wanted to restore unity of the Church, which is not necessarily the same as returning of separated Christians or the unity of the early Church. He did not call for non-Catholics to be assimilated, but for there to be full communion among the Churches. Specifically, he called for a true ecumenical communion with the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic. This mindset is encapsulated in article 8 of the dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (Abbott, 1966, p. 22). There were certainly misunderstandings of this concept so much so that the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith issued a document entitled, “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church” in 2007 clarifying its meaning. The Holy See indicated that the Church does not solely reside in the city of Rome but as the body of Christ, visible worldwide [Second Question and Response] (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2007).

The mentality here is that the East-West schism, and even the Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, did not destroy all unity within Christendom. Vatican II called for an ecumenical movement to restore a more complete union. The Council recognized that others adhered to

the sacred Scriptures, participated in a life of grace, and practiced virtues of hope, faith and charity. The actions of the Holy Spirit could be seen in Christians who were not Roman Catholic. That dogmatic Constitution described the Church as subsisting in the Catholic Church and not that the Church was only found in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>ix</sup> While the Roman Catholic Church saw itself as having the fullness of the Church, it did not see itself as having the only exclusive connection with the Body of Christ.

This was a fuller understanding of the ontology of the Church. It did not contradict, but rather clarified, the earlier understandings of the connection between the Church and Jesus Christ. The basic ontology of the Church cannot change because Christ is and always has been present in the Church. However, this visible presence of Christ has a dynamic relationship with human history. This relationship transcends time and space by the presence of the Divine. To be true to its mission, the Church is called to transform every age and is responsive to the needs of all without changing its very essence.

In the call for a new collegiality, Vatican II also called for a change in the appearance of the existence of the Church.

“Just as, by the Lord’s will, St. Peter and the other apostles constituted one apostolic college, so in a similar way the Roman Pontiff as the successor of Peter, and the bishops as the successors of the apostles are joined together. The collegial nature and meeting of the episcopal order found expression in the very ancient practice by which bishops appointed the world over were linked with one another and with the Bishop of Rome by the bonds of unity, charity, and peace, also, in the conciliar assemblies which many common judgments about more profound matters in decisions reflecting the views of many. The ecumenical councils held through the centuries clearly attest this collegial aspect” [Article 22, *Lumen Gentium*] (Abbott, 1966, pp. 42-43).

The new collegiality was not accepted by all and later led to a response of schism. The schisms that were generated by Vatican II centered on the notion that there is a discontinuity or a rupture in the traditions of the Church.<sup>31</sup> These objections to tradition were responded to by Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. Pope John Paul II<sup>32</sup> and Pope Benedict XVI<sup>33</sup> specifically said that Vatican II was not a rupture with tradition. There would be no grounds for schism in claiming that Vatican II had broken with the historic Roman Catholic Church.

Vatican II was not seen as a rupture or any sort of break with the historic Church. There were no new meanings or dogmatic statements in the documents of Vatican II. The Church found itself in a changed society and needed to address the Modern Era in a language and in a manner that was both understandable and pastoral. Just as Aquinas had taken the philosophy of Aristotle and expressed truths of the Church in scholastic terms, so too 20<sup>th</sup> century theologians were encouraged, with careful guidance, to express the truths of the Church in terms of modern philosophy. This encouragement was not a blanket endorsement of modern

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<sup>31</sup> Traditionalist schisms were led by Archbishop Lefebvre in France in 1977 and by the St. Pius X society (SSPX) in 1988.

<sup>32</sup> “To interpret the Council on the supposition that it marks a break with the past, when in reality it stands for continuity with the faith of all times, is a definite mistake” from the: “Address of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Conference Studying the Implementation of the Second Vatican Council”, February 27, 2000 (Vatican library, Pope John Paul II, speeches, 2000, January through March).

<sup>33</sup> “Vatican II declared no dogmas”, Page 23, “Joseph Ratzinger Life in the Church and Living Theology” by Michael Heim, Joseph Ratzinger and Maximilian Miller, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2007. See also “Theological Highlights of Vatican II” by Joseph Ratzinger, Paulist Press, Mahwah, 2009.

philosophies nor was it an indication that modern theological understandings were necessarily better. Rather, it encouraged expression of ancient truths in a language that modern peoples could readily understand. This new ability to understand ancient truths in a contemporary cultural and intellectual context would generate enthusiasm for the Christian experience that the early Church demonstrated. The emphasis was not so much on continuity but with authenticity.<sup>x</sup>

One of the aspects of Vatican II was that it understood the ontology of the Church as manifesting itself in relationship (Abbott, 1966, p. XX). The Church is the Body of Christ in a special relationship with the Savior. The Church's mission mandated that having a relationship not just with the members of that body, but also with all humans. There is an essence of relationship in the understanding of the Church.



## 2 CHAPTER 2 - CAUSE AND EFFECT, A HISTORY OF BEING ONE CHURCH

### 2.1 DEEPER CAUSES

This chapter will explore some of the deeper foundations for unity in the Church. The governance of the Church created contentious relations among Christians. As the Church spread to different lands, cultural interpretations were introduced to the faith. This chapter will present how Jewish and Roman forms of governance were incorporated into the Church. The urge towards unity developed in the early Christian community for many reasons. As mentioned in the previous chapter, unity was a bond of relationship among diverse peoples. Early Christians had the example of the governance of Jewish community. There was also the admiration for the earthly authority of the Roman Empire. The Sanhedrim and the Imperial Court were councilor examples that the Christian community quickly incorporated.

Augustine of Hippo speaks of the unity of the Church as a basic theme in the New Testament story of Pentecost. In his sermon 268 on the day of Pentecost, Augustine writes about how “the Holy Spirit made his presence known in the languages of many nations in the context of a united Church” [Sermon 268 - on the day of Pentecost] (Augustine of Hippo, 1993, p. 278).<sup>xi</sup>

Augustine emphasizes this unity of the Church in a diverse world as one voice speaking the languages of all nations. Here Augustine addresses the unity of the Church in the context of a diversity of nations.<sup>xii</sup>

“So, whoever has the Holy Spirit is in the Church, which speaks of all languages of all people. Whoever is outside the Church has not the Holy Spirit” (the Church Universal: see The Jerome Biblical Commentary 56- 7, The Letter to the Ephesians Commentary (Brown, 1968)).

“The reason, after all, why the Holy Spirit was prepared to demonstrate his presence in the tongues of all nations, was so that those who are included in the unity of the Church which speaks all languages might understand that they have the Holy Spirit. One body, says the Apostle Paul, one body and one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4)” [Sermon 268 - on the day of Pentecost] (Augustine of Hippo, 1993, p. 278).

At the very dawn of the Christian Church we find Peter leading the Church by publicly exhorting people who had gathered in Jerusalem to save themselves by heeding the message of the Good News, to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). From the very earliest days of the Church the institution of bishop in various ministries had been organized (1 Timothy 3). Leaders of the Church governed and passed moral judgments from the earliest days (1 Corinthians 5:3). The original Church leaders appointed others in positions of authority in each Church as the Christian message spread throughout the known world (Acts 14:23).

From the earliest days of the Church, it was understood that there was unity and variety in the community. There was a sense of ordering of the ministries and the governance of the Church. Yet, though there were a variety of members, they all constituted one body. Moreover, in that unity God designated orderly governance (1 Corinthians 12). In various letters, Paul repeats the same concept of a singular body made of many parts that include governance and leadership (Romans 12:8, 1 Corinthians 12:28). Members of the Church are encouraged to give deference to the acknowledged leaders of the Church and remain in unity by expelling those who do not receive this governance (3 John 9-10). Even subordinate leaders in the Church, such as deacons, needed the approval of the apostles who held a higher leadership position (Acts 6:6). All this indicated that despite various ministries and nationalities in the Church, there was a sense of unity and ordering in the Christian

community from the very first days. The Holy Spirit was seen as acting in the Church through its leadership.

If we consider schisms as mainly dealing with issues of governance, we are confronted with trying to understand leadership and governance in the Church. The example of leadership in the Jewish community at the time of the early Church may have been a role model for the Church itself. However, in this early period the Jewish religious community was undergoing dynamic changes (Whiston, 1876). Even in Jerusalem during the time of the Temple, there were synagogues in outlying areas (Luke 4:16, Mark 1:21). In distant lands, such as Roman North Africa the Jewish community centered around these synagogues. After the fall of Jerusalem in the year 70, a fundamental reordering of the Jewish religious community occurred. There were no more Temple sacrifices. The synagogue became the central point of worship. The governance of the Jewish community by the Sanhedrin gave way to more local synagogue-based leadership by various rabbis. These rabbis were recognized as leaders in their demonstration of wisdom, knowledge and ability to preserve religious traditions (Whiston, 1876).

In the first century, the Jewish community found itself at war with Rome. A 'Judas the Galilean' had introduced the idea that God was the only proper ruler of all Israel [Book 18, Chapter 1, and Paragraph 6] (Whiston, 1876). Activists saw signs from heaven to encourage revolt against Rome [Book 2, Chapter 17, and Paragraph 2] (Whiston, 1876). Corrupt Roman Procurators, such as Felix, assassinated High Priests of the temple [Book 18, Chapter 6, Paragraph 2] (Whiston, 1876) and Florus robbed the temple treasury and allowed pagan sacrifices in the temple [Book 20, Chapter 11, Paragraph 1] (Whiston, 1876). Josephus, himself finally preferred war against Rome during the reign of Nero and his procurators

[Book 20, Chapter 11, Paragraph 1] (Whiston, 1876). The final result of this war did not go well for Israel. Jewish leaders were killed and eventually the temple was destroyed.

With the dramatic changes in the leadership of the Jewish community, the early Church had new political and social examples of leadership and organization in the Roman Empire. Many saw during this period of the early Church the success of the Pax Romana as Rome moved away from a senatorial governance to an Imperial state [location968] (Rivington, 1894).

There were some similarities between the governance of the Jewish community and the government of the Roman Empire. The Sanhedrin was a select group of leaders whose actions culminated in the high priest. Rome had its Senate that dissolved into an Imperial court [Book 20, Chapter 10-14] (Whiston, 1876).

In the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of the New Testament, we find an outline of the early Church governance and traces of its development over time. It was a living community. Replacements for the original apostles were voted upon, ministries, such as the diaconate, were created for specific needs within the community. Various ministries were welcomed such as prophecy, speaking in tongues and healing of the sick. All these were incorporated in a hybrid model of the social and political environment of the time (Whiston, 1876).

Peter and Paul knew of the fall of the Republic and the institution of the Empire of Rome. Imperial rule had put an end to the long-lasting civil wars. The hierarchical form of government had brought peace and stability while the more Democratic Senatorial Rome had disintegrated into chaos. Religion in Rome was incorporated into the political life of Rome. As Roman politics changed, so did the religion. Rather than a separate class, the priesthood of pagan Rome was assumed into the Imperial duties.

At the time of the early Church, the Roman religion had transferred the position of pontiff to the newly created office of Emperor. This “bridge builder”, helped span the world of the mortals with that of the divine. The pontiff oversaw the college of Roman pagan priests. Roman religion did not seek to win over divine favors or appease the gods by its sacrifices and rituals, but rather it was an enterprise to secure the cooperation of the gods with the desires of mortals. Human religion sought to make a bargain with the gods. Augustus Caesar assumed the title of Pontiff Maximus in an effort to unify the Empire. Centuries later, the Bishop of Rome was given this similar title in recognition of the unity of the Church. Even today, the titles of Roman emperors continue in many Christian Church leaders who retain the title of ‘Reverend’ which is the English translation of the Latin title Augustus.

When Peter and Paul arrived in Rome, they found no Sanhedrin rule. It was the synagogue community that flourished in these communities outside of Israel (Levine, 2005, p. 283). Other examples of community organization that must have impressed Peter and Paul were the Roman household with its organization of the head of the house and servants. There were rhetorical schools that were highly structured in their faculty. In addition, there were several secret societies and many religions that were predominant in the city of Rome. All of these gave examples to both Peter and Paul of how small and large communities could effectively be organized. Failure of these communities to organize inevitably led to disunity.

Governance of any community involves an understanding of the dynamics of the unity of that community. Peter and Paul had two stark examples of how mob rule had brought out the worst in the human community. In the stoning of Stefan and in the trial of Jesus the mob was incited to act on impulse rather than with structured deliberation. The vacillating Sanhedrin, with its concern for recognition and seeking to preserve its power, acted more out of political

expediency than justice in its trial of Jesus. Paul used the division of the Pharisees and the Sadducees to create a chaos of governance allowing him to be set free. Furthermore, in Paul's appeal to Roman law, as a Roman citizen, he well understood the benefits of an objective system of justice. The structured, centralized and politically strong model of the Roman Empire stood in stark contrast to the weak Sanhedrin and rioting crowds in Jerusalem (Levine, 2005).

The first Jewish/Roman revolt (66 – 70) resulted in over 1 million Jews being killed and the destruction of the Temple. It must have been clear to the early Christian community that violence based on religious fervor would not be successful against an empire based on law and military strength. Rome had become even more powerful when the transition from a Republic to Empire under Caesar Augustus. Caligula and Hadrian continued the brutal imposition of Roman rule on all of Israel.

The Sanhedrin governing body was basically a religious council. The Nasi were the head of the Council but not members of the same councilor system of governance. This created the paradigm of the second Commonwealth, known as the second Temple (530 B.C. to 70). After 191 B.C., there was a loss of confidence in the high priest of the Temple. The Nasi gained power, appointing separate leaders within the Sanhedrin. Just as Rome evolved from a Republic to Empire, the Jewish community underwent a change resulting in the Sanhedrin with an oligarchical Nasi.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> A good resource for the Synagogues of this period is: "Jews, Christians and Polytheists in the Ancient Synagogue", edited by Steven Fine, 1997, Routledge Press.

With the end of the Cult of the Temple in 70, Christianity began to evolve as a separate sect. The Jewish community leadership from the Temple changed into the leadership of the rabbis in local synagogues. When all hope for a new Temple was lost in the revolt of Simeon Bar Kekhba in 135, Christianity finally developed into a completely separate religious community instead of a subset of the Jewish community. A system of Jewish patriarchy developed control in the reconstruction of the Jewish community and the purpose of their ordination was the handing down of the Jewish traditions. The patriarchs became known in Rome also by their Latin title of pontiff, meaning “bridge builders” (those who help span the world of the mortals with the world the divine and it also refers to those spanning the ancient traditions with contemporary political and social reality) (Bartholomew, 2008, p. xxxiv).<sup>35</sup>

Both the Jewish and Christian communities assumed much of the Roman culture. Since Latin was the predominant language of the Western Empire, it would seem natural that Latin terms were used for religious rites and offices. The incorporation of Roman culture and the Latin language into Christianity took time. For example, long before the Bishop of Rome was referred to as the Pope, the Bishop of Alexandria was referred to with this title of Pope in the fourth century (Lindsay, 1903, p. 187). This title also became reserved for the Bishop of Rome as a convention of that office. Under the leadership of popes and bishops there were local councils and senates. The earliest known gathering of a new generation of bishops was recorded in the Journal of Polycarp when he visited Anicetus in Rome in the year 154 (Lindsay, 1903, p. 188).<sup>xiii</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The term “Pope” was also used for an office in the pagan religion of Rome.

With example of both the Jewish community and the Roman government, early Christians had a blueprint of ecclesial governance. Scriptural allusions to the ordering of the Christian community are found in the Book of Acts (Acts 6:1-7, 20:1-35). Amalgamating the Life of the Spirit in the early Church with the Jewish and Roman traditions brought about a new hope (Ephesians 2: 14 – 22, 3:10). Each diverse member should be united to make up the whole with an ordering of apostles, prophets, teachers, and many more, all at the service to the whole body (1 Corinthians 12:1-32). This model of governance we shall later see expanded as missionary efforts brought the Church to more and more lands.

## **2.2 SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INFLUENCES**

Transitions in culture and societies rarely occur with a definitive singular date as what occurred on May 29, 1453. The fall of the Byzantine Empire to the Ottomans on that date constituted a substantial change in world history and transformed Christianity in the East and the West.

This chapter will review a few of the events that led up to the fall of Constantinople and summarize the events of the military conquest itself. In the latter part of this chapter is an explanation of the significant transformations in Eastern Christianity that occurred and how these were prelude to the continuing mission expansions into Russia and the resulting development of Christianity in the West.



The fall of Constantinople in 1453 was not the first time that the city had been conquered. In fact, the Byzantine Empire had been in decline for some time.<sup>36</sup> By the year 1090, the Muslims had a series of military victories that expanded their territory to include most of Syria, many of the Greek islands and, most symbolically, the city of Jerusalem itself. The Byzantine Empire in this era had sustained most of its military defenses using paid mercenaries. With the increasing threat by the Ottomans, the Emperor of Constantinople, Alexius, understood that he needed to increase the size of this mercenary army by appealing to the West. In the year 1095, he wrote a letter to Pope Urban II asking for a favorable reception of his request for aid. The Pope welcomed Emperor Alexis to Rome to plead his cause. Apparently, the reciprocal excommunications that occurred in 1054 had not generated a significant schism between the Churches of East and West (Brownworth, 2009, p. 233). The presence of Emperor Alexis in Rome proved to be very persuasive.<sup>37</sup> On November 18, 1095, Pope Urban II, who was in Claremont, France at the time, made a public appeal for Christians to rise against the Saracens and thus started the first of many crusades.

While each of the crusades might constitute a separate full study, let us focus on the Fourth Crusade. It perhaps had the most devastating implication for the eventual fall of

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<sup>36</sup> For this chapter several sources have been used for referencing historical events. These include: "A History of the Eastern Empire" (Baynes, 2014), "History of the Byzantine Empire" (Finley, 1853) and "Lost to The West" (Brownworth, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> Also, news about Islam atrocities in the east and Antioch massacre enraged the populace [Page 103] (Stark, 2016).

Constantinople in 1453. It is often mentioned also as an alienating factor between East and West.

The Third Crusade ending in 1192 failed to recapture Jerusalem, the great prize of all ancient Christian lands held by the Turks. The fourth call to the people of Europe for a crusade to gain back Jerusalem started in 1202. Through intrigue, the Venetians usurped the original goal of this crusade directing its knights and military action towards Constantinople itself. The deposed and fugitive Emperor Alexius IV joined the Venetians so that he might be restored as the sole Emperor of the Byzantine Empire. Upon hearing of the new goal of the conquest of Constantinople, many of the crusaders left the effort not wanting to battle their own Christian kinfolk. However, in a sense of honor, the remaining troops were told that it was important to restore the true Emperor and that honor, held in such high esteem by the culture of the time, required that the Westerners restore order and proper governance to the capital city (Brownworth, 2009).

Upon hearing of these plans, Pope Innocent III in Rome immediately sent out declarations to all. Any battle for the city of Constantinople, or even the planning of such a battle, (Brownworth, 2009, p. 256) would carry the penalty of immediate excommunication and was strictly forbidden by the Holy See (Armstrong, 2016, p. 34). Despite this ominous penalty, the Venetians dissuaded those crusaders with a conscience. The allure of rich booty for the common soldier was an additional factor the exiled Alexius IV put forth as a temptation. The conquest of Constantinople began on April 12, 1204. Within a few hours, the city's walls were breached, and the excommunicated entered the city. The soldiers who had not been repulsed by the thought of Christian killing Christian and did not heed the penalty of excommunication, were perhaps already the most morally reprehensible. They ravaged the

city for three days. The Venetians with the urging of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius IV, had completely hijacked the Fourth Crusade and the city of Constantinople never fully recovered from the devastation nor the embarrassment. Its riches were plundered, its military fortress was compromised, and the nightmare of slaughter left a permit imprint of fear on the population. In later years, the Eastern Church would recount this atrocity as one of the many reasons for not being in union with the West (Brownworth, 2009, p. 255).

However, the East had also perpetuated atrocities on Westerners, both at the provocation of their Emperor and with the blessings of the religious leaders.<sup>38</sup> In the year 1182, the Greeks of Constantinople rose against the Westerners in the city and massacred or sold into slavery to the Turks over 6,000 Westerners (Armstrong, 2016, p. 31). This was not the first time that Westerners had been slaughtered by the Byzantine government. In 1171 thousands of Venetians who were living in the Eastern Empire, were killed or imprisoned (Armstrong, 2016, p. 32).

These acts in 1104, 1171, and 1182 all indicate that there was a lack of cooperation between the East and the West. Stories of intrigue, manipulation of the enemy, greed, and political posturing in the Byzantine Empire all speak of the moral decline in New Rome.

The Byzantine Empire has been the longest Empire on record anywhere on earth with over 1,100 years of its existence after its founding by Emperor Constantine. This empire gives many examples of both its splendor and its dark side. The superb economic and justice system founded by Emperor Justinian are some of the reasons for its longevity. Its ultimate

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<sup>38</sup> Patriarch Dositheues of Constantinople gave absolution to any of the Greeks who killed Westerners [page 35] (Armstrong, 2016).

weakness, especially in the latter part of its existence, was that it relied on mercenaries and its diminishing wealth to protect its borders and pay off enemies. In the end, we find that this very method of financial diplomacy was the key factor to its final downfall. In addition, its exploitation of technology (e.g. “Greek Fire”) kept the Empire safe for over a thousand years. However, it was the Empire’s inability to pay for new technology (specifically, the large cannons of Urban the Hungarian)<sup>39</sup> that created the ultimate breach in defenses (Finley, 1853).

The city of Constantinople had for more than a millennium stood at the economic crossroads between the Far East and the West. Spices, silk and gold passed through the city filling its coffers and affording a lifestyle of high culture and the best military that money could buy. With the buildup of the Turk and later the Ottoman empires, that trade was interrupted. During this time, Constantinople continued to pour out large sums of money in military bribes to secure its borders emptying the treasury. Immense wealth, which it depended on for diplomatic and military solutions, was unsustainable.

From the very start of the city of Constantinople, there was a close tie between the Emperor and Church hierarchy. Indeed, the Emperor had interceded in councils of the Church such as Nicaea and recommended candidates for the office of patriarch. Constantinople saw itself, and even called itself, New Rome. It did not understand itself to have left the Roman Empire as much as an extension of that heritage and guardian of its best attributes. This after all was the intent of Emperor Constantine in founding the city. The example of a strong church-state relationship did not develop in the same way in the West. As Roman power

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<sup>39</sup> See location 14720 (Finley, 1853).

shifted to Constantinople and old Rome crumbled after repeated invasions, the Bishop of Rome filled the political vacuum providing consistent temporal governance as well as being a spiritual leader. This was not the case in the East. The Patriarch of Constantinople did not assume political governance [Loc Edition 1899] (Brownworth, 2009).

Even though Constantinople saw itself as the New Rome, after only a few generations it lost its use of the Latin language as Eastern Greeks filled the city and their language became dominant. Because of this, the Church in Constantinople eventually spoke the vernacular Greek language while old Rome retained ecclesiastic Latin. This difference in language precipitated a drifting apart of the two cultures and the two churches as well. As the common tongue became different and the cultures diverged, theological perspectives on Christianity also developed along separate paths [Loc 1986] (Brownworth, 2009).

It was understood however that both East and West saw themselves as united in the one common religion of Christianity. While there arose schisms and heresies, councils of reunification and synods declaring true dogma were regularly held. As testimony to this understanding of the basic union was the Emperor Alexis' appeal to Rome for a crusade to save the common east-west heritage. The Emperor did not hesitate to ask for help from his Western brothers in faith nor did the Pope shy away from helping fellow Christians in the East. The crusades themselves were an effort to save the one singular Church, not from internal schisms but from the external threats of the Turks and the Ottomans.

The Eastern Empire suffered many setbacks. The people of the Eastern Empire were the first to feel the effect of the black plague. The plague decimated large cities, small villages and weakened the military of both the Christians and the Muslims. Later, the West was also ravaged by this disease. However, it mainly affected large population centers. The external

military threats of the barbarians in Western Europe came from less populated lands that were not so severely impacted by the plague. In the West, invaders often found the inhabitants of large cities severely weakened by disease that had not yet affected them. It was not so in the East. The Black Death affected Muslims and Christians both of which lived in large population centers and villages.<sup>40</sup>

After repeated outbreaks, the common person in the West discovered that often the disease that afflicted their city had started in the East. The common person therefore, took a dim view of contact with the East. It is even more remarkable that so many bravely took on the pilgrimage of the crusades into Eastern lands that they knew brought disease to their own western communities. Given the great distances the Crusaders had to travel and the lack of organized logistics, we can be amazed that so many went on crusades, forsaking their businesses, farms and expending a great deal their own personal wealth for a holy cause that would never have a hope of material repayment. These crusades were not endeavors of pure conquest nor were the crusaders seeking only wealth. It cost more to go on crusade than would ever be hoped to gain financially. Western Europe was preoccupied with its own affairs and was not expanding into the East.<sup>41</sup> Pope Urban II's launch of the First Crusade in

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<sup>40</sup> More information about these facts of the Crusades can be found in: "The Crusades and the Military Orders", edited by Zsolt Hunyadi and Jozsef Laszlovsky (Zsolt Hunyadi, 2001), "Four Myths About the Crusades" by Paul Crawford (Crawford, 2011), and "Heart of Europe" by Peter Wilson (Wilson, 2016).

<sup>41</sup> See also: "The Crusades and the Military Orders," edited by Zsolt Hunyadi and Jozsef Laszlovsky, (Zsolt Hunyadi, 2001) "Four Myths About the Crusades" by Paul Crawford, (Crawford, 2011) and "Heart of Europe" by Peter Wilson (Wilson, 2016).

1095 was a call to save Christian brothers in the East from being separated from Rome and to liberate Byzantium. While some argue that the crusades were simply wars into the Holy Land in pursuit of wealth (Fischer, 1992, p. 438), others point out that it was well known that the actual cost to wage a crusader was more than any hoped for financial gain (Stark, 2016, p. 104). There was also the well-established idea that militant action, such as the crusades, would be a morally good act as “Augustine established its foundations by introducing the idea that the preservation of the unity of the Christian Church constituted a just cause for war” (Latham, 2011, p. 234). It is known that “the Latin Clergy articulated as one of its central interests the goal of Christian unity (under papal leadership)” (Latham, 2011, p. 232). It was on the principle of protecting fellow Christians and fighting for the one united Church that many joined the crusades (Stark, 2016, p. 105).

The Ottoman Empire, which eventually defeated Constantinople, developed out of the Muslim Turks. The Turks originally were nomads from Central Asia.<sup>42</sup> Around the year 1055, a group of Turks (the Seljuks) overtook the city of Baghdad and conquered the Arab world with the whole of the Islamic Empire. Their conquest gave them a rich Arab culture that had been thriving since the Abbasids family became the caliphs of the Empire in 750. Medicine, science, arithmetic, astronomy, marine navigation, libraries and centers of learning, together with extensive trade and large marketplaces, had all developed in the Arab realm under the Abbasids rule. With the fall of Baghdad, the Turks became the rulers of the Arab world. In 1301, Prince Osman declared himself Sultan of all Turks and began an

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<sup>42</sup> A good source for information on this topic can be found in “History of the Ottoman Empire” by William Deans (Deans, 1854).

aggressive campaign to expand his empire. He and his descendants became rulers of what became known as the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire expanded to envelop most of the Mediterranean world and threatened to conquer all of Europe. It only began to weaken after a defeat in Vienna in 1683. The Ottoman Empire came to a complete close in 1918 with the end of the First World War.

At its height, the Ottoman Empire incorporated much of what was the Eastern Roman Empire and portions of the Western Empire that surrounded the Mediterranean Sea. The Ottoman Empire overtook the ancient Roman Empire of the East.

In the year 286, Diocletian split the Roman Empire in two, East and West. It was not until the year 324 that Constantine reunited both the East and the West. The Emperor Constantine took the previously Greek city of Byzantium and renamed it Constantinople, making it the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. Constantine and Justinian wanted to start Rome anew in the East and developed Constantinople into a new Rome. For much of its 1,100 years, citizens of Constantinople referred to themselves as New Romans (Baynes, 2014) (loc 617).

In 476, Visigoths took over the Western Empire and their chief, Odoacer, declared himself King of Italy thus ending the Western Roman Empire. With the fall of old Rome, New Rome (Constantinople), became the sole center of Roman civilization and Imperial might. The city of Constantinople straddled the East and the West on a strategic trade and military isthmus. The wealth gained by trade through the city bolstered the military strength of the Eastern Empire.

When founding the city of Constantinople, the Emperor Constantine had recently become favorable to Christianity. In his zeal, he set out to make Constantinople a great Christian city (Angold, 2008, p. 33). Emperor Constantine made Christianity the preferred religion of the



Empire as part of his effort to make reparations for the sufferings the Christians had endured especially under Nero and Diocletian.

Despite this a religious affinity, Constantinople suffered from many political intrigues and religious conflicts. The first seven councils of the Church were all held in the Eastern Empire and the Emperor often was the one who called Church leaders together in Council to resolve religious matters. This dotting on Christianity <sup>xiv</sup> by both Constantine and Justinian generated a close relationship between government and Church in the Empire. In the West, there was no such intimacy with the invading tribes and foreign rulers of the decaying Western Empire.

As Emperor Alexis had done before, Emperor Manuel campaigned in England and France in the year 1400 asking for help to fight off the Ottoman Turks. No help was given and yet in 1422 when he returned, he defeated the Ottomans in several battles. The third son of Emperor Manuel was Constantine XI. When his older brother John died in 1448, Constantine XI was left as Emperor of the Constantine Empire. Constantine XI had two wives who died in their youth leaving him without heirs. Constantine XI became the last emperor to defend Constantinople.

Shortly after Easter in 1453, the Ottoman Sultan began his siege on the city of Constantinople. At first, he offered terms of surrender if the city would simply surrender to him and if its inhabitants became Muslim. Backed by the people of Constantinople, the Emperor rejected this offer and a siege of 57 days began (Rivers, 2016, p. 29).

There had been some religious division in the city prior to the siege in reaction to the Council of Florence that took place 20 years prior. The Council of Florence united East and West until the dissolution of the Eastern Empire. The Christians that survived the Ottoman assault were subsumed into a politically restructured Church under the Islamic millet system.

A few of the bishops in this reorganized Church abrogated the union established in Florence and thus laid ground for today's Orthodox Christians.

With the consent of the Emperor of the Eastern Empire, Pope Eugene IV gathered a Council in Florence in 1439. The Council specifically dealt with establishing stronger ties between the Eastern and the Western Christian Churches. Issues, such as the filioque and the magisterium of the Bishop of Rome, were extensively discussed, voted upon and resolved. Of the 148 ecumenical patriarchs and bishops attending, only Mark, Bishop of Ephesus, did not give his signature to the conciliatory document reestablishing the union of the Eastern and Western Churches. One particular layman attending the Council of Florence was Gennadius Scholarius, who during the council supported the cause of union based on doctrinal grounds. He would later be appointed Patriarch of Constantinople in 1454 by the Ottoman Sultan who had conquered the city. Thirty years later, in 1484, Scholarius (who had been freed from slavery by the Sultan who later also installed him as Patriarch), as the new Patriarch, joined four other Patriarchs in repudiating the union with the West to the great pleasure of the Ottomans (Arnakis, 1952, p. 237).

The Ottomans had attempted to take Constantinople in 1398 and in 1422. The attack in 1453 however had a distinctive advantage for the Ottomans. The city of Constantinople was the largest city in the known world and was served with a deep-water port that gave it both military and economic importance. The city had collected over 1,000 years of riches with public statues, elaborate buildings, and immense private wealth. By the year 1450 most of the imperial wealth had already been spent, but rumors of its vastness continued outside the walls of the city. This made the city to be a tempting prize for the young Sultan Mehmet II. The Ottoman army besieging Constantinople numbered over 80,000 men while the defenders of

the city were less than 7,000 including a few Western forces that managed to make their way to Constantinople before the battle.<sup>43</sup>

For many years Constantinople had taken advantage of Greek fire. This formidable mixture would be cast onto the enemy and it could not be extinguished with water [Loc2928] (Ludlow, 1886). It had relied many times on this technology. Now in its waning days, the Empire failed to see the importance of a new technology – black powder used in canons. The Hungarian inventor Urban, long before 1453, had presented to the Emperor of Constantinople his prize concept of a super cannon. It required over 60 oxen to move it into location and 200 men to operate (Nicol, 1993, p. 382). When the Emperor was not able to pay Urban the amount of money he requested, he promptly took his invention to the Sultan.

The Sultan paid Urban to make 69 of these huge canons capable of firing stone balls weighing 680 kilograms in bombardment on the walls of Constantinople (Nicol, 1993, p. 384). On May 11, 1453, the barrage began. The walls of Constantinople could not withstand the repeated bombardment. There were many brave efforts to rebuild the wall and mitigate the damages, but the consistency and the size of the onslaught proved to be too much. Each cannon was said to have fired 120 shots per day over a six-day period (Nicol, 1993, p. 386). The defenders of Constantinople had artillery also, but it was much smaller and effective only at close range. They had been outgunned by the Ottomans. With one last volley from his arsenal of canons, the Ottoman troops assaulted the walls on May 29, 1453. For three days, the Ottomans sacked the city.

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<sup>43</sup> A good source for details on the battle can be found in “The Captain of the Janizaries, A Story of the times of Scanderberg and the Fall of Constantinople” by James Ludlow (Ludlow, 1886).

This singular event many historians consider the break between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (Wells, 2006, p. 114). For Christianity, it had a lasting impact. Certainly, for the East the reconfiguration of the church-state relationship was changed. The government was no longer Christian, and the Eastern Church would be subordinate to Islamic rulers. The great cathedral Hagia Sofia, where the great union of Florence was announced in 1452, was turned into a mosque. Patriarch Gregory had escaped the city and was under the protection of the Bishop of Rome. The last Emperor of Rome, Constantine XI, died in battle with no heirs.

All in the West lamented the loss Christian Constantinople. Pope Nicholas V welcomed the refugees of Constantinople and even commissioned the most famous composer at the time, Guillaume Dufay, to write a motet lamenting the loss and urging Westerners to retake the great city of Christendom.

“O most merciful font of all hope,  
father of the son whose weeping mother I am:  
I come to complain before your sovereign court,  
about your power and about human nature,  
which have allowed such grievous harm to be  
done to my son, who has honored me so much  
for that I’m bereft of all good and joy,  
without anyone alive to hear my laments.  
To you, the only God, I submit my complaints,  
about the gravity is torment and sorrowful outrage,  
which I see the most beautiful of men suffer  
without any comfort for the whole human race”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> This canticle is attributed to Guillaume Dufay who wrote it in 1454, at the request of Pope Nicholas V, to lament the Fall of Constantinople. According to researcher Alejandro Enrique Planchart, (Planchart, 2008) the persona of the speaker is the Virgin Mary as indicated in the use of the double genitive in the title (Fellows, 1995, p. 55).

The implications for the Church in the West from the fall of Constantinople were substantial. A new Patriarch of Constantinople was installed by the Sultan as the temporal ruler of the Christians in exchange for being the principal tax collector of the Christian community. The Ottoman Empire instituted the millet system for the Christian citizens of Constantinople.<sup>45</sup> Under the millet system, Christians were seen as second-class citizens and there were other provisions that made sure that the Christians would not be competitors to the religious aims of the Islamic population. This included constraints on Christian missionary activity.

Subsequently the position of patriarch required an honorarium to be paid to the Sultan by candidates (Arnakis, 1952, p. 241). Over time, this honorarium increased and became competitive. “Thus the patriarchal office was open to the highest bidder; there was a growing tendency for wealthier bishops to be elected and as might be expected these were not always the holiest men” (Arnakis, 1952, p. 247).

The proposition that less than holy men occupied the seat of the patriarch did not necessarily nullify their ecclesial legitimacy. However, the appearance of interference by the non-Christian Sultan was present.

The new Church-state relationship after 1453 brought about a different era in Church history. In the early stages of the Church, there was outright persecution of the Church by the state. After Constantine, there was a melding of both Church and state interests. Over the 1,100 years of the Byzantine Empire, the Church and the state had become inseparable in the

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<sup>45</sup> For details on the Millet system see “Foundations and Myths of the Millet System” by Benjamin Braude (Braude, 1982).

East.<sup>xv</sup> In the West, after the fall of old Rome, the Church assumed many of the government's activities as exemplified in the establishment of the Papal States. Over time, many of the Western governments understood themselves as Christian nations. This was not so for those in the East under the Ottoman Empire. Under Islamic rule, the Eastern Church was relegated to a reduced place in society and became a church in captivity. The Eastern Church had entered an era in which it focused on survival more than expansion. In the West, the economic and political ramifications the fall Constantinople gave rise to the Renaissance and the age of exploration. The discoveries of the Americas gave European Christianity new territories in which to carry out missionary expansion.

During this period, the Western Church enjoyed an intimate rapport between Church and state and was at the forefront of artistic and intellectual development throughout Europe. Because of this, the Church in the West was later ill prepared for the secularization of the Enlightenment with its insistence on the separation of church and state and the secular philosophy of individualism. The slave trade in the early Roman Empire, East and West, was almost completely abolished during the beginning of the Christendom and would not return until the Reformation. In the Eastern Empire under the Ottomans, slavery became a major trade and the capturing of slaves continued for centuries in Africa (Stark, 2016, p. 162). After 1453, the Church in the East was struggling with its disenfranchisement from the state and a non-Christian society.

Christianity in the West became the majority religion, while in the East it was relegated to a minority. This social and political setting of the Church in the East transformed the religion of Christianity in the East. The Churches in the East no longer interacted with each other in a singular voice. Each of the churches took on more of a national and ethnic identity neglecting

an emphasis on their united faith. Theological and liturgical stagnation set in as each of the local churches struggled to maintain their identity.

After the fall of Constantinople, the population of the Eastern Church was decimated. Many were slaughtered, and some 60,000 people alone were sold into slavery when Constantinople fell (Herrin, 2003, p. 43). As the Ottoman Empire continued to increase, whole areas such as Bosnia, voluntarily accepted Islam and abandoned Christianity. The Eastern Church continued the best it could. Declaring itself “ecumenical,” only four Eastern patriarchs formed the Synod of Constantinople in 1484. No bishop from the West was invited. In this Synod the Eastern Church completed its retraction, declaring that Moscow would be the “third” Rome and a refuge for Christianity.<sup>46</sup> During this same time, the Western Church was erecting its first mission edifice in the Americas (the Church of Santo Domingo was completed in 1512) adding vast new continents to its territory.

## **2.3 ECCLESIAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

For the first time in over a thousand years, Eastern Christianity was to be in a state governed by a political leader who did not favor Christianity after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453. This would have deep significance to the religious practice and, more importantly, the leadership of the Church. Politically, the Church was reduced to an

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<sup>46</sup> See 1510 Philotheus of Pskov declaration in 1510 in “Twenty Centuries of Christianity” by S. V. Sannikov [page 76] (Sannikov, 2001, p. 76).

instrument of the state for the collection of taxes. Separation from Rome was instituted as an official policy in keeping with the political ambitions of the Ottoman overlords. This eventually led to an expansion of Orthodox Christianity beyond the reach of the Ottoman, mainly to the North into modern day Russia.

There were many changes to Christianity after Emperor Diocletian, who famously persecuted the early Church. After he fell ill in his late 50s, he made the unprecedented move of abdicating. He convinced his co-Emperor, Maximian, to step down at the same time (Brownworth, 2009, p. 10). The two of emperors appointed their Caesars, Galerius and Constantinus the Pale, to become senior emperors of the Empire in the East and the West respectively. This would ensure an orderly succession of power without the devastation of civil war that Rome had known in the previous generation. While this unusual transition worked at first, it had unintended long-term consequences. The sons of Maximian and Constantinus the Pale, Maxentius and Constantine, later rose up and became bitter enemies. Quickly, Maxentius took over the city of Rome. Upon hearing this, Constantine left the war against the Picts in Britain and made his way to Rome. Unsure that the city of Rome itself could be defended against Constantine's army; Maxentius rushed his own army away from the city and set up across the Tiber River to meet Constantine's forces.

At the battle of Melvin Bridge, Constantine won a complete victory over Maxentius (Brownworth, 2009, p. 11). It was at this battle that Constantine had his first positive impression of Christianity. Many of his own troops attributed his victory to the protection of the Christian God. While Constantine continued to practice his pagan religion, he nonetheless instituted a new era of religious tolerance within the Roman Empire with the Edict of Milan.



Emperor Constantine wanted to increase his Empire beyond Rome by pressing his military into the Eastern part of the Roman Empire. On September 18, 324, Constantine won another decisive battle near the Bosphorus in the Greek colony of Byzantium. With that victory, Constantine, at the age of 52, became the sole ruler of the entire Roman Empire East and West. After this, he transferred the administration of Rome to the town of Byzantium making it into the city of Constantinople (Brownworth, 2009, p. 16).

Shortly after the founding of Constantinople, Christianity was not only tolerated but it became the dominant religion. The practices of paganism including temple sacrifices, temple prostitution and infanticide were all forbidden by the Emperor. Despite these favors given to Christians, Christianity itself suffered from dogmatic divisions and schisms.<sup>47</sup> The Church suffered division from its very beginning and there were many attempts at reconciliation.<sup>48</sup>

Emperor Constantine saw divisions among Christians as dilatory to his empire. A unified religion would give him a unified Empire. Constantine saw in Christianity the opportunity to unite the Empire. Christianity had already taken on a Catholic, or universal, structure that could be applied to the entire Empire (Ignatius of Antioch uses the word “Catholic” for the

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<sup>47</sup> Schisms in the early Church included: Ebionites (63), Marcionites (144), Montanists (156), Sabellians (220), Novatians (251), Felicissimists (251), Meletians (307), Donatists (311), Arians (325) Luciferians (362), Priscillianists (380), and the Messalians (38).

<sup>48</sup> See Galatians 1:8 and Acts the apostles 15: 2-35.

first time in his Letter to the Smyrnaeans, Chapter 8<sup>49</sup>). However, Christianity lacked sufficient leadership in his opinion (Brownworth, 2009).

Unity in the Church was paramount to the Emperor. The various dogmatic heresies and their subsequent schisms threatened that unity. Thinking himself as a great leader, Constantine wanted to unite the Christians and have their support for his social and political ambitions. Constantine did not seek to change or reform Christianity; rather he saw the necessity of the Church to remain united. For this reason, he instigated the Council of Nicaea to resolve the then current Arian heresy and schism.

### 2.3.1 **The Arian Heresy threatens unity**

Arius was preaching that Jesus was not fully God. At the Council of Nicaea, Christian leaders condemned Arius for promulgating false doctrine. As a resolve, the Council approved a statement of belief now known as the Nicene Creed. As the symbol of the First Ecumenical Council, the Nicene Creed became the definitive statement of what it meant to be Christian in 325. There had been many councils of the Church that attempted to resolve schisms after the Council of Nicaea. The Council of Constantinople in 869, the Second Council of Lyons in 1274 and the Council of Florence in 1439 are examples of actions taken to retain unity. The Council of Florence was the last great attempt of the Church in the East and West to unite. After the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Empire, unity would be frustrated by

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<sup>49</sup> See “Apostolic Fathers”, Lightfoot & Harmer, 1891 translation and Philip Schaff: Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, “Introductory Note To The Epistle Of Ignatius To The Ephesians” for another version of its first use.

geopolitical events, including the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, world wars, and the grip of Communism in Eastern Europe.

Constantine did not establish a separate sect of Christianity, rather he provided the environment in which the already existing Church could thrive and grow. The Church in Constantinople was not a schismatic group nor was it dogmatically different from the already existing Church in Rome that was in direct succession from the early apostles (Meyendorff, 1989, p. 71). In council, the Christian Church was defining itself and forming canonical order. These foundations would guide the Church in the future, giving it a rich tradition and forming the base upon which it would build and expand far beyond the Roman Empire.

During Constantine's governance, many churches were built and dedicated. In Constantinople, the life of the Church was allowed to express itself in public liturgies and be housed in magnificent structures. Throughout the persecutions of Diocletian, Christians longed to take their religion into the public forum. It was under Constantine that they were able to practice their religion in public. Christians could celebrate their liturgies of Breaking of the Bread in buildings made specifically for worship and no longer had to hide in the catacombs or in the recesses of private homes. Large gathering places were built.<sup>50</sup>

The beginning of the Church followed immediately after Pentecost and continued during the lifetime of the original apostles. During that time, the Good News was carried throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. The Christian faith was handed down from generation to generation and there were many periods of severe persecution. It was especially during the

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<sup>50</sup> The great Hagia Sophia was completed in 537 under the direction of Justinian I who succeeded Constantine.

time of the persecutions that the early Church Fathers contributed to rich traditions of Christianity that have supplemented Scriptures and aided ecclesial leadership. The rise of the Church in Constantinople can be seen as perhaps a further developmental phase in the life of the Church.

### 2.3.2 **The final Council of unity**

Despite the efforts of many emperors, there arose many with divergent ideas of Christianity. Each time this occurred the Church addressed the errors and further clarified the meaning of Christian belief (Davis, 1990, p. 18). Aside from issues in fundamental dogma, there was also a persistent questioning of the governance of the Church. Since the Church is seen as a living organism, deference to leadership is integral to its functioning as one body in unity. The qualities of leaders might distract from the mission of the Church but does not discount the presence of the Spirit in its life. Humans are merely the instrument of the Divine Plan. The qualities of God's ministers are not indicative of the authenticity of the institution He has founded. A living faithfulness, with periods of severe doubt or even sin, together with times of great inspiration and valor constitutes the living Church. Unity, despite poor leadership and times of great challenge, is the unfailing and consistent assurance of the Church.

The Church in the East and the Church in the West constantly drifted apart. The two were situated in very different political, social and economic environments. Each had glories and failures in their own right. Distractions developed and there were repeated miscarriages at maintaining unity. Both sides gathered in good faith repeatedly to restore unity. The Council of Florence was the last of the great councils that aimed at an ecumenical restoration of unity.

As history would prove, political events would frustrate open and direct communications between the East and the West centuries thereafter. The council was well attended.<sup>51</sup> Issues at the council were addressed by some of the greatest minds ever in Christian history. The Council of Florence was no more coercive than previous councils were. One of the first motions by every single attendee was to declare the Council as being truly ecumenical. Major dogmatic and pastoral matters were resolved at this Council. However, one bishop did not sign the final agreement at the Council of Florence. Mark, the Bishop of Ephesus refused to accept a declaration of all the other bishops at the Council. In previous councils of the Church, there had also been those who refused to accept a Council's findings. Nonetheless, the Church as a whole understood that a Council had spoken definitively as an ecumenical unity despite any minority dissension.

Attending the Council of Florence was a layman, Georgios Scholarius (later in his life he was known as Gennadius Scholarius). He supported the union from the Council of Florence and even contributed to the philosophical and theological understandings that convinced bishops to sign the document of the union on July 5, 1439.<sup>52</sup> After this, in a complete turnaround, he would become the strongest voice against the union that the council had established.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See *The History of the Council of Florence* by Aleksandr Vasil'yevich Gorski, translated by S. Matthias, published by Joseph Masters and Sons, London 1861.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

As mentioned in previous chapters, schisms in the Church are not always based on heresies. Governance of the Church and appropriate leadership had often been grounds for disunity. In the case of the Second Council of Lyons and at the Council of Florence, there was also the dogmatic issue of the filioque that was germane to the differences between East and West. Recognition of leadership was not an immediate concern. Other minor topics included priestly celibacy, communion under both species and the mystery of the sacrament of matrimony. At the Council of Florence, the dogmatic issue of the filioque was resolved more as a pastoral solution rather than a theological statement.<sup>54</sup>

While there was consternation among the faithful in Constantinople upon hearing the agreement made in Florence, there was an announcement of great joy in the Basilica Hagia Sophia upon its announcement. Indeed, Emperor Constantine XI (who would soon become the last Emperor of Constantinople) announced that the agreement in Florence was a sacred act of unity benefiting the whole Church.<sup>55</sup>

Three years after the city fell, the Sultan Mehmed II put in place the millet system to assure tranquility in the city and as an easy way to collect taxes from Christians. He allowed Christians and Jews to continue in their religious practice (perhaps assuming that eventually the Scriptures that the three religions shared, would lead them inevitably to the religion of

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> See section X of "St. Mark of Ephesus and the False Union of Florence", by Archimandrite Amvrossy Pogodin, Orthodox Information Center (<http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/stmark.aspx>). Mark of Ephesus is considered a saint by the Orthodox Church. See also: "The Lives of the Pillars of Orthodoxy" (Holy Apostles Convent and the Dormition, Skete, 1990).

Islam). He took a layman, by the name of Gennadius Scholarius, out of prison and had him ordained as a Christian priest by a few bishops there who were also in captivity. He was then offered the seat of Patriarch of the city. Few alternatives were available to the new bishop with fresh memories of the Ottoman prison in his mind. Scholarius accepted the position with great reluctance. He was not sure of his competency and he was concerned with the appearance that he might be seen as giving complicity with the conquerors of the city.<sup>56</sup>

Scholarius was appointed as the first Sultan sponsored Patriarch of Constantinople. From this event, the Eastern Church undertook a divergent path in its leadership of Christians. The Sultan wanting to cut off any allegiance to old Rome and the Western world encouraged the new patriarch to reformulate the relationship of various Churches that had been held under the Catholic schema. Later, this reformulation would give birth to the concept of the autocephalous churches in the founding of the Orthodox Church in Russia.<sup>xvi</sup> The introduction of the Ottoman Empire into Byzantine culture and the Eastern Christian Church was difficult for the Christians of Constantinople. The Ottomans confiscated Church wealth making day-to-day operations and even the thought of doing missionary activity impossible.<sup>57</sup> Those who were not slaughtered during the conflict in 1453, attempted to flee the city. In an effort to repopulate the city, the Sultan quickly arranged to Scholarius installed as the new

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<sup>56</sup> There remains the unresolved issue of whether his installation was licit or not as Constantinople was never an apostolic see nor was his installation recognized by other patriarchs.

<sup>57</sup> See: "In the Lion's Den: Orthodox Christians under Ottoman Rule, 1400-1550" by Neil Paradise, University of North Florida, 2006 ([https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ojii\\_volumes/67](https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ojii_volumes/67)) All Volumes (2001-2008).

patriarch of Constantinople on January 6, 1454. Scholarius openly cooperated with the Ottoman Empire.<sup>58</sup> Christians, under the rule of the Ottoman Sultan, now made every effort to sever all ties with the West including any relationship with the Pope.<sup>xvii</sup>

The Sultan gave the Patriarch his royal protection. The Patriarch was put in charge of the Christian millet with the chief duty of collecting taxes. The non-Muslim Christian population was not held in high esteem by the conquerors. In fact, the Arabic word for ‘herd animal’ (raya), was used by the Ottomans to describe Christians. The interference of the Sultan in Christian affairs corrupted the office of the Patriarch.<sup>59</sup> <sup>xviii</sup>

We find that in 1572, Sultan Selium I accepted 2,000 gold florentine in exchange for his favor to appoint Jeremiah II as patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>60</sup> For many years thereafter, the patriarch went to the highest bidder.<sup>61</sup> As long as the patriarch collected sufficient taxes for the Sultan, the Christian religion was officially tolerated. <sup>xix</sup>

In an effort to please the Sultan even more, Patriarch Jeremiah II went to Moscow to collect taxes in the year 1589.<sup>62</sup> This act set the stage for what later would be the autocephaly Church of Russia. The Russians saw no need to participate in anything within the Ottoman

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<sup>58</sup> See: pages 236, 337, “The Greek Church of Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire”, by G. Georgiades Arnakis, *The Journal of Modern History*, Volume 24, Number 3, September 1952, The University of Chicago Press.

<sup>59</sup> See page 238, *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> See page 241, *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> See page 247, *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> See page 243, *ibid.*



Empire, far to their southern border. Because of the Ottomans influence in the Church, the Russian Church sought complete separation from Constantinople.

While official Ottoman policy called for tolerance and acceptance, there were many cases where Church property was seized, Church officials were compromised by intrigues and humiliated. Many Christians were forced into the Islamic religion.<sup>63 xx</sup>

It was a difficult task to appease the Sultan and Patriarch Scholarius resigned three times, only to be forced back to office because no other man would accept the challenge.<sup>xxi</sup> The interference in church matters is exemplified in the case of the patriarch Joseph Quercus. In the year 1464, he refused to give a divorce and a remarriage decree to a good friend of the Sultan and subsequently he was exiled.<sup>64 xxii</sup>

### 2.3.3 **Unity Broken**

Before the fall of Constantinople, many intellectuals fled to Rome. Others made their way north. In Russia they found a welcoming home as they were both separate from the Western Church and from the Ottoman Empire. In Russia, this immigration did not spark the Renaissance as it had in Western Europe. Rather those migrating north laid the foundation for the birth of a new Rome and a return to an older form of Christianity (Brownworth, 2009, p. 303).<sup>xxiii</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> See page 244, *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> See page 245, *ibid.*

While many historians focus on the history of Rome, it must be remembered that the Eastern Roman Empire with its capital Constantinople, had a far more persistent impact on Christianity. What we call the Byzantine Empire lasted for over 1,100 years and became the longest lasting political government ever known, anywhere on earth. This social, economic and political setting became a solid foundation for Christianity. Such a persistent cultural and political setting gave a solid foundation to the belief that change in Christianity was less than beneficial.

Prior to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, many of the craftsman and learned people knew the end would be near and migrated to the West specifically in Italy. Rome benefited from this influx of this Byzantine culture that had preserved the best of the Roman Empire. During the early centuries of the Church, the See of Rome was the seat of Christian orthodoxy and many Christian leaders in the East had sought refuge and advice from the Chair of Peter. These leaders included St. Anna Theus in 339, St. Basil the Great 371, St. John Chrysostom from 404, St. Cyril of Jerusalem from 330, and the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1449 just before the Orthodox schism.<sup>65</sup>

The fall of Constantinople accelerated Ottoman expansion. Indeed, the Muslim encroachment into Europe continued through to the beginning of World War I. Because of its location, Italy was the first focus of many immigrants from the former Byzantine Empire who could seek the safety of the West more easily by sea than by land.

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<sup>65</sup> See: "Sailing From Byzantium," by Colin Wells, Published by Bantam Dell, 2006.

Some historians date the beginning of the Renaissance in Western Europe to the date that Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>66</sup> While no fixed date defines the cultural, artistic and intellectual period known today as the Renaissance, the date 1554 is significant in history as a defining moment between the Middle Ages and can be understood as the start of the Renaissance (Wells, 2006, p. 114). For nearly 900 years, the walls of Constantinople had kept the Muslims away from most of Western Europe despite significant inroads and settlements in portions of the Iberian Peninsula, Sicily and southern Italy and Southeastern Europe. As the walls fell, the intellectual and artistic riches of Constantinople were transferred to the West generating its rebirth.

The West welcomed the influx of these artisans and intellectuals from the former Byzantine Empire. The popes especially saw in these the opportunity to also revive Christendom. There was an atmosphere of exhaustion in Europe from several expensive crusades into the East. The devastation of the black plague and marauding barbarians depleted the population of Western Europe. With much enthusiasm, several popes embraced this new era wanting to promote the rebirth of culture. They undertook massive building projects, the expense for which would eventually be the undoing of the unity in the West as protests grew against the unauthorized selling of religious favors.

Soon after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Union of Florence was abolished by some bishops in the former Eastern Roman Empire. However, formal abandonment of that union was not made until the year 1483 when Patriarch Simeon I presided over a local

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

council of Churches (Setton, 1976, p. 66). This action was the formal schism between Orthodox and Catholic Churches that has yet to be resolved. The foundation of the schism, of course, was laid many years prior in the mutual excommunications in 1054 of the Bishop of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>67</sup>

The Renaissance reformed the political, social and religious landscape of Western Europe. New technologies also contributed to these changes. Gutenberg's press with movable type in 1450 made books more available and, more importantly, made the business of trading in books a new religious force. Later this enterprise lent itself well to those who insisted that religious traditions should be replaced by personal Scripture readings. Instead of indulgences, reformers could now sell and profit from the sale of printed religious material. The Renaissance also saw the beginning of more secular music as entertainment that was underwritten by individuals of wealth who were immune from the moral oversight of religious leaders. Society was so optimistic and adventurous that political leaders supported projects such as Christopher Columbus and his adventure across the ocean.

As the East was in the grip of the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim culture, the West developed a new culture of its own. This created diversity in theological understandings between the Eastern and Western Churches. This diversity only reinforced the schism created by the fall of Constantinople. The new Patriarch of Constantinople and other bishops in the now Ottoman Empire accommodated their new political situation. Devoid of a Christian

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<sup>67</sup> There are some who believe that the final schism actually occurred when the Sultan appointed Scholarius as patriarch. (see premise, without conclusions [page 61] (Setton, 1976), [page 209] (Papadakis, 1997)).

Emperor and without the privileges of a Christian culture, the Eastern Church felt free to abolish its agreement of unity with the West that was made in Florence.

In the year 1485, a small group of Eastern bishops formally announced that they withdrew their support of Florence (Papadakis, 1997, p. 209). It is significant to understand that the Eastern Church did not make a declaration of annulment to the agreement of Florence.

After its fall to the Ottoman Empire, the new Constantinople<sup>68</sup> was a restructuring of not just the political and economic landscape of the city, but also a reshaping of the Christian Church in the East. With the encouragement of the Sultan, most of the West was trimmed away leaving only a single branch of Christianity that accommodated the Muslim political, cultural and religious demands.

The West retained its catholicity even as it expanded into new mission lands. The East developed differently. While the West benefited from the migration of Byzantine culture after the fall of Constantinople, there was a rekindling of Christianity in the East beyond the borders of the Ottoman Empire. Perhaps because of the political situation in the East, Christianity developed with more emphasis on local churches. Western Christianity enjoyed the succor of Christendom. Under the Muslim presence in the Ottoman Empire, Eastern Christianity had no such encouragement. Surviving as a religion was difficult enough for the Eastern Christians. Under the Sultan's political influence, the Church adapted. The next section will explore how the administration of the Eastern Church developed independent communities and carried on mission activities beyond the reach of the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>68</sup> Constantinople did not change to the name of Istanbul until after 1930.

## 2.4 DYNAMICS OF TIME

This section presents an outline of the beginnings of the Eastern Church as it spread the Gospel in the Balkans and what is today Russia. In its missionary efforts, the unique character of the Byzantine Church was conveyed. While the Western Church had a solid foothold within the Roman Empire as it ventured into pagan lands, the missions of the Eastern Church were to peoples outside of the Roman sphere. Adaptation to these new cultures is a hallmark of these early Eastern missions (Obolensky, 1957). This included use of the vernacular, liturgical innovations and translation of the Scriptures into local languages. Since the West still had major territories not occupied by the Ottomans, it retained the Roman cultural base that was admired among the invading tribes. With the presence of a Muslim culture and the interference of Ottoman leaders after the fall of Constantinople 1453, Eastern Christians found themselves in a completely new situation.

Before the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Eastern Church had undertaken missionary efforts. The story of a Christian expansion into the Slavic and Ruses territories begins in the Prefecture of Illyricum in the town of Thessalonica (Obolensky, 1994, p. 286). An important figure that influenced Eastern mission effort was Demetrius of Thessalonica. Before Demetrius died as a martyr in the year 306, during the persecution of Galerius Maximus, he had won the hearts and minds of many to Christianity.<sup>69</sup> He was posthumously made patron of the city of Thessalonica when prayers for his intercession saved the city from the Slavs in

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<sup>69</sup> Thessalonica also holds a special place in Eastern Christianity as the home of many great figures such as George Palamas.

the year 445. This was considered a miracle attributed to Demetrius' heavenly prayers asking God to intervene and save the city (Obolensky, 1994, p. 287).

Later, the intervention of Demetrius was sought as the Byzantine Church sent missionaries into the northern Slavic territories. The famous Byzantine missionaries, Cyril and Methodius were brothers. Methodius at one time was a papal legate and both attribute their success as missionaries to Demetrius who was seen as the protector of Christians in pagan lands (Obolensky, 1994, p. 290). Cyril and Methodius understood that they were protected from harm by the grace of God invoked by the intercession of Demetrius.

The influence of the missionary efforts in the East had a significant impact in spreading Byzantium culture in the Slavic and Ruses territories (Obolensky, 1994, p. 290). The Emperor Pororteous sent Cyril and Methodius to the Slavic nations. The brothers invented and alphabet to facilitate the writing of the Slavic language. They helped change the Slavic peoples from being simply hunter-gatherers to an agriculturally based community (Obolensky, 1994, p. 308).

When the first missionaries met the Slavs, the landscape of the Balkans had already been changed by the Roman Empire. At the beginning of the Byzantine Empire, Emperor Justinian had cleared large areas to service his troops and to avoid ambush by the Slavic warriors. The result was tracts of land ready for agricultural use and ripe for early missionaries to introduce the art of growing crops to the nomadic Slavic peoples (Obolensky, 1957). Despite arduous work, Cyril and Methodius did not have great success at first. It took a series of exploits by Slavic overlords before Christianity made major inroads in the Slavic culture. The spread of Christianity took place on the heels of the Slavic military expansions, such as with the Slavic chief Oleg in the tenth century (Obolensky, 1994, p. 310).

Oleg, a Slavic warlord, is considered the founder of the first Russian Empire [loc 477] (Abbott, 1859). He had invaded Constantinople in the year 907. Instead of the complete devastation of the city, the Emperor of Constantinople made a peace treaty with Oleg guaranteeing to pay him huge amounts of gold on a regular basis [loc 307] (Abbott, 1859). This payment enriched the next Russian ruler, Igor, who eventually attacked Constantinople again for more money [loc 525] (Abbott, 1859).

Igor's wife, Olga, became interested in Christianity after Igor's invasion of Constantinople the second time. She had Christian scholars and priests sent to Kiev to teach her. She was impressed by the philosophy and the theology of the Christians. After a visit to Constantinople, she was baptized in the year 955 [loc 564] (Abbott, 1859). She took the Christian name of Helen [loc 576] (Abbott, 1859). Olga's conversion set the stage for the next event of mass conversions to Christianity. After Igor's death in a battle, his uncle Vladimir took the throne. He was a pagan and arranged for human sacrifice as a thanksgiving to the gods of good fortune. A Christian father and son, Ivan and Theodore, were put to death as a sacrifice to the pagan gods. Their example of bravery and steadfastness to their Christian faith impressed Vladimir [loc 688] (Abbott, 1859).

Many years later Vladimir became sick and he had second thoughts about his pagan ways. Fearing that perhaps his gods would not save him after death, he sought out a better religion [loc 688] (Abbott, 1859). He sent inquiries out to investigate the best religion that could save his soul. One group of ambassadors went to Constantinople [loc 691] (Abbott, 1859). They reported their experience of the liturgy in the Hagia Sophia to Vladimir. To the ambassadors the liturgy was so beautiful that they 'knew not if they were in heaven or on earth' [loc 692] (Abbott, 1859). This they reported to Vladimir. Others in court reminded him



that Olga had become a Christian earlier because the philosophy and theology of the Christians made sense to her [loc 693] (Abbott, 1859).

Recovering from his illness, Vladimir asked the Emperor of Constantinople for his daughter in marriage. She agreed but only on the condition that he become a Christian before marriage. He was so enamored with her and because he had been predisposed by the reports of his advisors and Olga's example, he agreed to be baptized a Christian [loc 702] (Abbott, 1859). He so enthusiastically embraced his religion that he invited all the Slavs to join him [loc 721] (Abbott, 1859).<sup>70</sup>

#### 2.4.1 **Christianity spreads throughout Russia**

The story of Christianity's expansion into the Rus' territories (part of which later became Russia) is distinctive in mission history. To help better understand these developments, it will help to look at some foundational characteristics of the Byzantine culture that spawned the growth of the Church into the lands north of the Eastern Roman Empire.

After the mission to the Jews at Pentecost, Antioch was the next very large city to have the Good News brought to it. The mission effort in Antioch started with the resident Jews

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<sup>70</sup> The reports that he forced his people to be baptized are doubtful. Rather, he had ministers announce how he came to embrace Christianity; he proclaimed the Gospel message publicly and invited the people to join him in forsaking the worthless pagan ways as he had done [loc 722] (Abbott, 1859).

(Act 11:19). It was later that the Gentiles were to hear of Christ and Christianity spread to other parts of the Roman Empire.

The Early Church was beset with difficulties throughout the Empire. Nonetheless, the Early Church gave an example of solidarity when the Church in Jerusalem was in need (2COR8:1 – 9). To address the needs, the early apostles administered the affairs of the Church giving example of the need for a hierarchical administration (ACTS 6:1-7). Disputes and factions also arose. The Arian, Monophysites, Manicheans and others also plagued the Church. At first, these seemed to overwhelm the Church leaders.

After the early persecutions of the Church and after the changes under Emperor Constantine, the Christian Church was finally free to build and conduct worship in public. Even though the religion had existed for some 300 years, it did not have its own unique cultural heritage. The Church did develop much of its theological concepts during those 300 years. However, the Church lacked an organized administrative body as it grew within the Empire. Lack of clear authoritative supervision permitted divergent dogma to slip into the everyday life of Christianity (McGoldrick, 2006, p. 20). The newly converted populace tended to absorb whatever spurious religious concepts may have been prevalent at the time. The Manicheans and the Arians are examples of beliefs that came to be held by the majority of uncritical Christians, only to be identified as heresies later. Heterodoxy was often the democratically held understanding of the majority in the early Church.

What we today understand as Christianity was a minority religion at the time Constantine became sole Emperor (McGoldrick, 2006). The fostering of religious institutions in the Church was a collaborative effort of both bishops and leaders in the community. Constantine's invocation of the Council of Nicaea was not an imposition of secular authority

that created a divergent religion. Rather, the Emperor's involvement was a further catalyst that sparked the convocation of already existing Church authorities to speak out as a singular body to resolve heterodoxy.

Throughout the ages, the contribution of secular society provided the cultural context for Christianity to evolve in and for nurturing of the Church's authoritative teaching structure. Shortly after Constantine, Emperor Justin I also saw the need for further development of the Church's administration. The 'Tome of Justin' in 531 formulated a suggested government system for the Church. In that document, he endorsed the idea of five centers of Christianity based on where the original Apostles founded churches<sup>71</sup>. These include Jerusalem (founded by James), Antioch (founded by Peter), Rome (founded by Peter), Alexandria (founded by Mark) and Byzantium (later named Constantinople, founded by Andrew).

At the Council of Trullo in 692, this idea of five centers to envelop the known world was formally accepted and each was ranked in importance to give further order to the administration and avoid rivalry. Rome ranked first among equals with the remaining ranked in the order as Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem (Thompson, 2009).

The five cities were among the first that the apostles reached to bring the Good News to the whole world. The bishops of all five cities attended the first eight ecumenical councils

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<sup>71</sup> At the Council of Chalcedon in 451, there was a suggested Canon 28 (which was rejected) that the importance of the location be based not on the founding of the apostles, but rather on its political importance. This was extended later to Moscow calling itself the "Third Rome" as the political landscape changed in the 16th century.

held between 325 and 880. Their participation made the councilor decrees an action of the whole united Church.

In 1085, Antioch fell into Muslim influence. After that time, it became impossible to have a truly ecumenical council. The Muslim Empire had already enveloped Jerusalem and Alexandria after the 7th century. It is important to note that after these cities were occupied by the Ottomans the loss of the ability to gather the whole Church was not because any particular church held heretical views or that they were in a self-imposed schism. The political and social changes set up barriers and divergent churches evolved. When Constantinople fell into the hands of the Ottomans in 1453, the very heart of the Eastern Church was affected.

Shortly after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottoman Empire suffered several defeats in its expansion into Europe, specifically in Spain and later in Hungary. These defeats made the Ottomans more entrenched and defensive against anything Western. With this close affinity to the Ottomans and Constantinople's new imposed disdain for Old Rome, the continued efforts to reunite the Church after the Council of Florence failed. Having the Church in Constantinople survive the Ottoman presence was the immediate goal of the Patriarch. As the Ottoman Empire was eventually pushed back, the Western Church followed the military into territories that had long been within the Eastern jurisdiction. This encroachment further antagonized the Eastern Church.

In the 1484, at the local Synod of Constantinople, presided over by the pro-Ottoman Symeon I of Trebizond, there was a formal denouncement of the Union of Florence between the Orthodox and the Roman Churches. It is interesting to note that this Synod did not rule on the findings of the Council of Florence, it merely abolished the concluding union (Eliot,

1908, p. 236). The abandonment of the Union of Florence in 1484 by Patriarch Simeon I formally put the Western Church and the Eastern Church into schism. Under the Ottoman schema, there was no possibility for reconciliation.

Less than ten years later, there was to be an explosion in mission territory in the West with the ocean crossing of Christopher Columbus. For centuries thereafter, the experience of the mission efforts in the Americas, the African continent and into Asia became the saga of modern Western mission exploits. Mission efforts in the Eastern Church were met with a series of unfortunate circumstances that paralyzed any mission work.

Before Constantinople fell in 1453, mission efforts had already been undertaken to the lands to the north of the Byzantine Empire. These missions proved to be the safe repositories of the Eastern Church. Without these early missions, the retention of the Eastern tradition may have disappeared.

#### 2.4.2 **Early Eastern missions**

When missionaries first ventured into the area we now call Russia, they could not have known that they were helping to establish the “Third Rome.” The lands north of the Black Sea were a wilderness. To venture out beyond the protection of Constantinople took a brave commitment. The first missionaries were bolstered by their love of the Gospel and the understanding that their mission was part of a grand plan of salvation history. The missions to the Rus’ invoked the concept of Rome as the eternal city, part of an expanding empire (Obolensky, 1994, p. 283).

Rome was seen as more than a cosmopolitan center. Rome was not just where Peter’s life ended. It was understood to be part of the divine plan of salvation. The confluence of

civilization, Christianity and culture that imbued Rome would not end. Christianity renovated the city into an instrument of the Gospel. Eventually, “Rome” as the city at the service of Christendom would be translated geographically by Constantine. As old Rome fell into decay, Constantinople arose to be of service. For over 1,000 years, it served Christianity. Shortly after Constantinople was finally conquered by the Ottomans, another new Rome was translated to Moscow. Moscow was praised by the Eastern Christians as the ‘Third Rome’. This third Rome was a renovation of Byzantium with a church reformed in its abandonment of ecclesial attachments to old Rome (Obolensky, 1994, p. 283).

Cyril and Methodius brought the Good News to the Slavs in a much different way than the West brought it to their missions. Keeping to the spirit of the Canon of the Scriptures that were based on their liturgical use, these two missionaries presented Christian prayers and liturgy to the Rus’ in a powerful way. They used the beauty of the liturgy and the effectiveness of Scriptures in the vernacular to enlighten souls and overcame the hardened hearts among the pagans. To help plant the message, they translated the liturgy into the local tongue making it accessible to all. They used enculturation centuries before the first Guttenberg Bibles were printed. At the time, the Church was Catholic. Therefore, their message was one of a universal Christian faith for all peoples and all cultures. Cyril and Methodius undertook the monumental task of developing a written language for the Slavs. This was not only to bring Scriptures to the people, as was the Catholic tradition, but it also was to inculcate the Slavs into the Divine Liturgy, allowing them to have full participation in the saving actions of the whole Church.

The work of Cyril and Methodius was made easier by previous missionaries. These early missionaries allowed the brothers to retain the religious nature of their venture despite the

political motivations of their sponsors (Dvornik, 1964, p. 195). Earlier missionaries had made contact with a Danish Viking who had ventured into the territory of Rus' becoming a prince of a major region. By the time the brothers Cyril and Methodius arrived, Virgil had converted Prince Rastislav who rejected paganism and had his people living under Christian laws (Dvornik, 1964, p. 196). Rastislav's conversion was tainted with political advantages. His region lay strategically between the West and the East. It became clear to the Prince that the West would not make a good ally because the mountain ranges made military logistics impossible and because the West was preoccupied with its own warring factions. The East had to consolidate militarily, with a focus of warding off the Ottomans. The East also was focused on sustaining its longer history of both economic and political stability. Since East or West presented the same basic Gospel message, the choice between them was facilitated by secular concerns (Dvornik, 1964, p. 197). To bolster his choice of the East, Rastislav asked for more missionaries from the East to be sent. This started the political and cultural transfer of Byzantium to Rus' in the context of Christianity.

The arrival of Cyril and Methodius brought the beginning of Christianity to larger portions of the East. With the East and West being Catholic, the brothers received endorsements from the Pope Adrian II to use the vernacular in the liturgy and go even further in producing the Bible in the local language. While there were some who feared that translations might introduce errors, Rome was confident that the Holy Spirit would guide the work.

It is a sad testimony to Church history that some less than holy people infiltrated the Church and attempted to frustrate the Divine plan for salvation (Dvornik, 1964, pp. 204-208). A few years after this papal endorsement, Cyril and Methodius were attacked for their

innovations by liberal factions. A false papal document was circulated refuting the endorsement and the missionaries to the Slavs carried on their work without the knowledge that Rome indeed approved of their methods (Dvornik, 1964, p. 209).<sup>72</sup> Eventually the Magyar invasion into Hungary stopped the reorganization of Moravia and the reinstatement of the Slav language endorsement (Dvornik, 1964, p. 209). Nonetheless, books in the Slavic language had already reached Kiev. The work of enculturation had taken root and Christianity was firmly planted in Russia. When Constantinople fell, Kiev was ready to receive the transfer of Christianity to itself (Dvornik, 1964, p. 211).

The spread of Christianity into Rus' started with the exploits of a Danish Viking, Rurik.<sup>xxiv</sup> Rurik made his way down the rivers of Russia past Moscow and to Kiev. He established himself as the ruler of these lands. Continuing his enterprise, Rurik attacked Constantinople. Emperor Michael II easily defeated Rurik and he returned to Kiev. The way the emperor defeated him so impressed Rurik that he invited missionaries to tell him more about the God whom the people of Constantinople took as their protector. In this way, Christianity was welcomed into the lands of the Rus'. The Patriarch of Constantinople wrote of the effect of this adaptation in 866.

“The Russians, so celebrated for their cruelty, conqueror of their neighbors, and who, in their pride, dared to attack the Roman Empire. They had already renounced their superstitions and had embraced the religion of Jesus Christ. Lately our most formidable enemies, they have now become our most faithful friends. We have

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<sup>72</sup> Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into German also would receive skepticism because some believed that errors might arise if another language was used.



recently sent them a bishop and a priest, and they testify the greatest zeal for Christianity” [loc 377] (Abbott, 1859).

Rurik’s son, Igor, was too young at the natural death of his father to be king. Therefore, Oleg was appointed, and he made Kiev the capital of all of Rus’ in 879. Oleg further developed the kingdom. When Igor reached the age of maturity, he took Olga as his wife in 903 [loc 418] (Abbott, 1859). Years later, Olga listened to the sermons of those first missionaries who settled in Kiev. She was impressed by their words and the liturgy [loc 557] (Abbott, 1859).

When Igor suddenly died, Olga took the crown [loc 543] (Abbott, 1859). She then decided to become a Christian herself. Impressed with the beauty of Christianity, she made a pilgrimage to Constantinople for her baptism in the renowned Hagia Sophia, which she heard to be the most beautiful church in all Christendom [loc 558] (Abbott, 1859).

Olga’s grandchild, Vladimir, was born out of wedlock (he was the love child of one of her bride’s maids and her husband) and his father met his death in battle. There was not much hope of him becoming of any significance in Rus’, so he fled to the Normans to the West. Even though his grandmother had embraced Christianity, Vladimir did not ascribe to the religion, rather entrenching himself in the pagan practices in the land of his refuge.

Vladimir’s fate changed when he met the princess Rogneda in the Provence of Polotsk. Rogneda made it clear that she was not interested in a man conceived by a slave [loc 672] (Abbott, 1859). Outraged, Vladimir killed Rogneda’s father and forcibly took her. Emboldened, Vladimir retook Kiev and established himself as king of Rus’. Upon his victory in Kiev, Vladimir gave a great feast. As was the custom, human sacrifice was given as thanks to the pagan gods [loc 673] (Abbott, 1859). A young Christian boy was chosen for the

sacrifice. As the boy, Ivan, was prepared for the sacrifice, his Christian father Theodore attempted to rescue his son. Vladimir ordered that both be killed and offered to the pagan god Peroune. These two are among the first martyrs of Russia [loc 684] (Abbott, 1859).

Vladimir's cruelty eventually became his nemesis. However, as with his grandmother, beauty was eventually the instrument that awakened his conscience [loc 694] (Abbott, 1859). The Christian missions to Russia are not like those in the Americas, Africa and Asia. Cyril and Methodius had fostered Christianity by enculturation,<sup>xxv</sup> but this did not generate a state of Christendom as would happen later in the West. In Russia, Christianity's presence was by invitation. Towards the end of Vladimir's life, his cruelty wore on his conscience. He sought for a solace that would comfort his soul beyond death. Too ill to travel, he sent ambassadors to the East, West and South. They were to find a religion that would soothe his mind. Vladimir's first selection included the Jewish and Muslim religions. Circumcision, prohibitions against alcohol dissuaded him from these (Wells, 2006, p. 235). Roman Rite Christianity, with its requirements for fasting did not inspire him (Wells, 2006, p. 236). He had sent representatives to Constantinople. There, the delegation was awestruck by the beauty of not only the great church of Hagia Sophia, but of the liturgies held there as well. They reported that during services, they were so impressed they 'knew not if they were in heaven or on earth' (Wells, 2006, p. 236). Vladimir apparently inherited his grandmother's predilection for loveliness. Judging the Liturgy of Eastern Christianity as being worthy of a most Supreme God, Vladimir immediately wanted to embrace the religion. However, his conversion was not a peaceful surrender to God's will. Befitting his demeanor, Vladimir immediately sent an army to attack Constantinople. To appease the invader, the emperor sent rich gifts to Vladimir [loc 707] (Abbott, 1859). The gesture worked not only to stop his

aggression, but Vladimir completely embraced Christianity and invited all the peoples of Russia to join him [loc 719] (Abbott, 1859).

The statue of Peroune (to whom Vladimir had sacrificed the father and son, Theodore and Ivan) was battered and melted down to become the foundation for the decorations of several Christian Churches. On the bank of the Dnieper, thousands of Rus' were baptized in 988 [loc 720] (Abbott, 1859). By the time trained missionaries had arrived from Constantinople, a whole people had been converted and were waiting to hear more about their new religion. After Vladimir's death, all of Rus' lapsed into chaos. However, the seed had been firmly planted and Christianity would eventually sprout anew after Constantinople fell to the Ottomans and refugees fled to the North.

This chapter gave a survey of the events and the people that are the turning points setting the foundations for Christianity in the Balkans and what is modern-day Russia. The changes in Constantinople after 1453 would progress into a rebirth in the East, generating an eventual self-declaration of Moscow as the "Third Rome." This change ultimately devolved into a metamorphosis of the Russian Orthodox Church. However, as later chapters will explain, this did not create a transnational Catholic Christendom as had developed in the Western European Church.

### **3 CHAPTER 3 - THE MISSIONS, UNITING THE CHURCH**

#### **3.1 EASTERN MISSION EFFORTS, PRELUDE TO AUTOCEPHALY**

This chapter will present the missionary context in the Eastern Churches' development of autocephaly. The first Church making a declaration of self-governance was in Russia. The political situation in Russia was unique and its isolation lent itself to considering independent self-rule. The mission expansion of Christianity into Russia was unlike that which occurred into Africa, Asia or the Americas.

Unlike the Apostolic Churches in Constantinople, Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch, the Russian Church never fell into Muslim control. Missionaries into Russian territories enjoyed a more friendly reception (though there were significant difficulties). This was different than what happened in the Americas and Asia where missionaries were not welcomed from the start.

The impact of Islam cannot be underestimated in Church history. In 630, Islam began to spread with the Prophet Muhammad's entry into Mecca. It had a distinct advantage over Christianity at the time. Christianity had suffered from many schisms from its very beginning (1 COR 1:10). Councils of the Church addressed heresies and made divisions within Christian communities with their declarations of orthodoxy. Islam had a religious problem with the Christian understanding of the divinity of Jesus. There would be no compromise on this dogma for the Islamic faith. This, among other matters, set Islam and Christianity on a path of violent confrontations. Despite some issues of governance, Islam was at first a united religion (as Christianity was in its early days). This helped Islam grow quickly and have a far-reaching military power that Christians did not have until the Crusades.

Islam's first foothold into Christian territory was in North Africa. North Africa already had a long history of Christianity. Aside from Israel, North Africa is the most Ancient of Christian lands (Eusebius, 1965, p. 50). Jesus had walked as a young boy in Egypt (Matthew 3:19) and it is understood that the Apostle Mark brought the Gospel to the continent and established the Church of Alexandria. Alexandria was declared one of the five early centers of Christianity. Alexandria was to be the foundation of the Coptic Christian Church. It was also the first to fall to the Muslims in 639 [loc 1344] (Meinhardus, 1999). Already separated from the other Christian Churches after the Council of Chalcedon in 450 because of its monophysitic theology, it was not recognized by the other churches and left on its own. While the conquering 'sel' seemed tolerant at first, he eventually started a heavy taxation on Christians which became intolerable. While Christians were not allowed into the Ottoman army, they did enjoy its military protection. The Amir thought it was only appropriate to tax the Christians in lieu of military service. Rather than pay the tax and suffer social persecutions, many converted to Islam. This attrition exacerbated the situation for the Christians in Northern Africa. Not only were they no longer free to practice their religion openly, as their numbers declined, the amount of tax that they had to pay increased in order to sustain the same gross amount each year. Several Coptic uprisings were put down and many churches were destroyed. This further subjugated the Church with many losing all enthusiasm for Christianity. Missionary efforts were halted. The remainder of Africa would not become missionary territory for the Coptic Church for another thousand years [loc 1345, 1349, 1352, 1360] (Meinardus, 1999).

In 1046, the Coptic Patriarchy was moved from Alexandria to Cairo where it remains today. Knowing its schismatic status, the Coptic Church did not appeal to the other churches

for help during troubled times. Rather it accepted its fate and held on by the smallest of hope [loc 1363] (Meinhardus, 1999).

### 3.1.1 **Western mission efforts**

The missionary efforts in Europe differed from that of Russia in many ways. The Latin language was promulgated in religious and academic matters. There was little attempt at first to enculturate as the legacy of Rome was still a treasured memory. Later, after the fall of Constantinople, the Byzantium refugees sparked the Renaissance that reignited the primacy of classic Roman culture. In 711, Islam made a significant inroad into Europe at the battle of Guadalete in Spain (Macnab, 1999, p. 23). However, Islam failed to overcome most of Western and Northern Europe leaving major portions of the continent to develop into Christendom during the Middle Ages. Christian mission efforts into Europe reached the far North (Norway) around the year 1000 and were dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. Protestant divisions in the Roman Catholic Church did not appear until after the Muslims were expelled from Spain. The political calm that followed allowed for unbridled internal dissidence spurred on by economic and political interests. The opening of the Americas gave completely new territories for the heretical to live unfettered and the unscrupulous to exploit. The Catholic Reformation and the Protestant movement arose in the absence of a Muslim presence.

### 3.1.2 **Mission efforts into Russia**

The early missionary work in the East had the distinctions of generating vernacular worship liturgies, the development of an indigenous clergy and some degree of self-

governance in the context of a patristic ecclesial structure. There was also the overt effort to appreciate local cultures and the absence of colonialism (Stamoolis, 2001, pp. 21-22). There is little comprehensive material on the Eastern Orthodox mission efforts from the Fall of Constantinople up to the present day (Stamoolis, 2001, p. 19). This is not because the Orthodox were disinterested in spreading the Gospel. Rather, the occupation of the Ottomans brought a repression of Christians throughout the East. There was little aid from the West for the Eastern Orthodox. The West was preoccupied with local wars and exploring the New World. The “Age of Discovery” in the West was a major distraction for all Europeans. The sheer size of the Americas would preoccupy Westerners. The West did not really notice the East until the creation of the powerful Soviet nation after World War II.

The heavy taxation of Christians by the Ottoman Empire also depleted funds for missionary work. Restrictions on building new churches made establishing new places of worship for converts extremely difficult in the East. The bright spot in the development of Christianity after 1453 in the East is Russia. Remote from the Muslim oppression, the Russian Church was able to build on the pillars of Byzantine enculturation, the growth of local clergy and a degree of self-governance imbued by the first missionaries. The wholehearted conversion of Vladimir had a lasting effect. Religious experts from Constantinople were welcomed and sponsored. Relics, sacred vessels and icons were imported into Russia. As with the Roman Church, the Orthodox based themselves on the Scriptures and were in harmony with the Sacred Traditions of the Church. Under these conditions, Christianity flourished in Russia.

Eastern Christianity did not have schismatic reformers during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. While there were many abuses in the Russian Church, these were handled by an intervention

of the state, as had been the tradition in the Byzantine Church in Constantinople (Stamoolis, 2001, p. 27). Under the reforms of Peter the Great (1682 - 1725), early mission monasteries were put under government control. Imperial leadership removed the impetus for secular protests that had overtaken the Western Church. However, it also limited the mission efforts of the Church in the East (Stamoolis, 2001, p. 28). There were a few mission exploits that did occur. However, those that did take place yielded exceptional results. The mission efforts to the Altai ranges, led by Macarius Gloukharev in 1828 proved successful after he abandoned verbally preaching the Scriptures. When he became a servant to their material needs, especially in medicine and general hygiene, the people became receptive first to the Liturgy and then to the Gospel as embodied in the Eastern Church (Stamoolis, 2001, p. 31).

Macarius Gloukharev is noteworthy in that he reignited mission efforts in the East and is considered the first to develop an Orthodox theory of missions (Stamoolis, 2001, p. 50). He was innovative in having women involved in his missions and approached church planting in an ecumenical way.<sup>73</sup> His Hesychist experience allowed him to focus on Orthodox spirituality without distractions from his all-encompassing ministry (Stamoolis, 2001, p. 31).

Christian missionary campaigns are often a call to unify desperate Christian groups to combine resources, then go forth and spread the Good News. The call to missionary effort was often seen as the coalescence of logistics and a strengthening of purpose that required unity. Before the World Council of Churches (founded in 1948), there was no effective organizing mechanism to bring about a comprehensive unity of effort in the Protestant and

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<sup>73</sup> Macarius Gloukharev worked on common worship centers that included Quakers and other non-Orthodox [page 31, note 52] (Stamoolis, 2001).



non-Protestant Christian missions. Unity was seen as the best of effective mission efforts, especially concerning providing material support. Spiritual and theological unity was not needed for the humanitarian efforts of Churches (Stamoolis, 2001, p. 109).

In the West, there was the growing missionary theme of bringing justice to the poor along with material aid. The Roman Catholics built on this simple concept of justice and found inspiration in the Scriptures for uniting their efforts to feed the hungry (Matthew 14:16). In this synthesis of justice and charity, the presence of the Church in mission territories can also be seen as the manifestation of the Kingdom of God (Stamoolis, 2001, p. 111). In this way, missions resulted in a continued unity of the Church even as its geographic presence increased. The Church is the singular manifestation designated by Jesus in the teaching commission (Matthew 28:19-20) to bring the Good News to all. The mission effort in this understanding continues to be a witness to the power of salvific acts, in the context of the Church's actions and not in only words (1 Timothy 1:1:5).

The Russian missionary efforts would constantly ebb and flow with the politics of the region. This correlation with local politics and the Church was also a major theme in the West. Many in the West called for a separation of the Church from the state.<sup>74</sup> In the East, the Imperial influence in the Church was present at the very start and became stronger over

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<sup>74</sup> See John Calvin in his "Institutes of the Christian Religion", where he distinguishes between the spiritual kingdom and the political kingdom. The First Amendment of the United States Constitution is an antecedent to today's popular idea of church/state separation

time.<sup>75</sup> With the Ottoman presence in Constantinople after 1453, there were no longer missionary efforts to Russia from the Byzantine Empire. Further, with the abrogation of the Union of Florence, the Eastern Church formalized the separation between East and West.<sup>76</sup>

The Church in Russia was completely on its own after Constantinople fell in 1453.<sup>77</sup> Because of the Islamic presence, the Eastern Church became isolated from the West. The consequences of this isolation were the consistent conservative posture of the Eastern Church when faced with prolonged persecution and isolation. This reticence to change is especially noticeable in the use of music in the liturgy. In both the East and the West, a cappella vocal music was the norm. Musical instruments were discouraged, in part because it was associated with the contemporary pagan religions and folk music in many cases. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century West, the organ was one of the first musical instruments to be used in the Liturgy. The

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<sup>75</sup> An excellent study on the mission methods of the Eastern Church can be found in: Hayes, Stephen Tromp Wynn, (1998). "ORTHODOX MISSION METHODS: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY", Doctoral Thesis, University of South Africa.

<sup>76</sup> Lyons and Florence may not have been declared ecumenical by subsequent councils [page 381] (Papadakis, 1994). However, with the autocephaly system, the synod did not necessarily need to be completely ecumenical to have force and this canonical objection was not made when the union was abrogated after the fall of Constantinople.

<sup>77</sup> The Church of Russia had declared independence from the Church of Constantinople in 1448. Later they elected their Primate, Jonas. There remained a union of Orthodox churches after this. The patriarch of Constantinople was seen as the head ecumenical patriarch.

Orthodox Rite did not make instrumental music innovations to their liturgies. The Coptic and Ethiopian Churches however, did use percussion instruments from the earliest times.<sup>78</sup>

### 3.1.3 **Autocephaly, the end result of missions in the East**

The concept of autocephaly, while not unique to the Eastern Church, was endorsed in the East. As former mission territories gained their own political independence and with a weakened patriarchy in Constantinople, the Church in Russia became fully independent. It was the first Church to do so. In the West, newly planted churches were incorporated into an ever-expanding Roman Catholic embrace. In the East, the practice of autocephaly made for fully separated churches. The umbrella of “Orthodoxy” was a shared differentiation from Rome but did not imply unity with other Orthodox Churches other than a few very basic theological concepts (Angold, 2008).

The result of the early mission efforts in the East was the establishment of several autonomous churches. Autocephaly is not the same as modern-day non-denominationalism with local congregations being affiliated with other congregations or other churches that have their own peculiar doctrine and worship formats. In the case of the Orthodox Church of Russia, it self-identified as adhering to the one true Church of Christ and was to be governed by its own geographically bound hierarchy. While there was the creation of autonomous Orthodox Churches, that did not imply schism among these Churches. There was no significant dogmatic divergence among the various Orthodox churches.

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<sup>78</sup> See: “When did the churches start using instrumental music?” by Elesha Coffman, Christianity Today, August 2008.

After the final fall of Constantinople in 1453, there remained only one Apostolic City that was not under Muslim rule. It remained free of significant religious rivalry, as the Muslims presented elsewhere in the former Roman Empire. Rome however was beset by the crumbling infrastructure of the Empire. The necessity of assuming the role of civil administration in the vacuum of the fallen Empire pushed Church leaders in the West into secular state service. The Roman Church was not prepared for this role and history would show what a distraction this effort in civil policing became to the Church. By the time protesters of the Pope formed their own congregations, the West had developed a replacement for Roman Imperial government, and the Church was in the process of returning civil government to the people (who had originally asked the Church to fill the vacuum left from the fall of the Empire. The dissolution of the Papal States in 1870 constituted the final withdrawal from civil government of the former imperial territories). Many of the new governments in Western Europe seized upon the opportunity to rally their citizens and supported separation from anything Roman. This process created schisms not just in the Roman Church, but quickly created schisms within the protesters themselves. Leaders of all the Churches did not look favorably on the schisms that ensued. <sup>xxvi</sup>

This section has been a review of the Eastern mission efforts. In contrast to the situation in the West, the works of missionaries in the East eventually led to independent Christian Churches most of which adhered to basic Orthodox dogma. This tendency toward autocephaly in the East ill prepared the Eastern Church for the age of nationalism that was soon to sweep through the Balkans and Europe after the 16<sup>th</sup> century. We will explore this in more detail next.

## 3.2 MANY PEOPLE, ONE FAITH, THE FIVE CHURCHES

The five apostolic churches were the precursors of the Orthodox self-governed churches. In this chapter are some highlights about each of the five patriarchies and how they were interdependent Churches from the very beginning.

### 3.2.1 The Five Apostolic Patriarchies

## JERUSALEM

Jerusalem started as the first of the apostolic patriarchies on Pentecost. There is a tradition that James the Just, also called James Adelphos, who was the cousin of Jesus on his mother's side, was the first bishop or patriarch of Jerusalem (Thompson, 2009).

Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus (commonly called today St. Jerome), wrote in his book on famous people ("de viris illustribus") the story Hegesippus, on how James was the head of the Church in Jerusalem (Wace, 1892, p. 361).<sup>xxvii</sup>

In the year 638, the city of Jerusalem became one of the Arab caliphate's first conquests. In 698 the Dome of the Rock was built, containing a rock that Muhammad stood on to ascend to heaven.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> See: Steven J. McMichael (2011) "The Night Journey (al-isrā') and Ascent (al-mi'rāj) of Muhammad in medieval Muslim and Christian perspectives, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*", 22:3, 293-309.

## ANTIOCH

Orthodox Church tradition has it that the Patriarchy of Antioch was founded by the apostle Peter. It was the fourth largest city of the Roman Empire at the time (after Rome, Ephesus and Alexandria). It was the place where the people of “The Way” were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). The Council of Chalcedon in 451 created long lasting tensions for the patriarch. Some accepted and others rejected the declarations of the council. In 512, those rejecting Chalcedon, met a Sidon. Flavin II (a Chalcedonian) was supplanted by Severus (a non-Chalcedonian). The non-Chalcedonians under Severus came to be called the Syriac Orthodox Church. In 637, during the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, Antioch was conquered in the Rashidum Caliphate during the battle of the Iron Bridge (Thompson, 2009).

## ROME

As a Church ‘in its own right’ (*sui juris*), Rome was the seat of the Patriarch of the West. This Imperial city, which saw the martyrdom of both Paul and Peter, extended its distinct jurisdiction over all the other churches. In the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome took a preeminent seat. He was the first among equals. At its most influential, he exercised the apostolic privilege of Peter. As the Empire of Rome fell in the West, the Bishop of Rome was called upon to be the civic leader, which eventually evolved into him being the head of the Papal States (Thompson, 2009).

## ALEXANDRIA

The patriarchs of Alexandria trace themselves back to the lineage of Mark the evangelist. At the Council of Chalcedon in 451, a schism occurred in Egypt, to those who accepted and those who rejected the decision of that council. Consequently, the Church of Alexandria devolved into the Coptic Church and the Miaphysite Churches according to their understanding of the nature of Jesus (Thompson, 2009).

## CONSTANTINOPLE

The Ecumenical Patriarch is the Archbishop of Constantinople. The city of Constantinople was referred to as the 'New Rome.' As such, it ranks as 'primus inter pares' (first among equals) with several autocephalous Churches that form the Eastern Orthodox Church. Tradition has it that Andrew the Apostle was the first bishop of what was later called Constantinople (Thompson, 2009).

### **3.2.2 Leadership of the five Churches**

The councils of the Church were instances of unity among the centers of Christianity. Assembling to address dogmatic issues, the councils gathered the leadership from all the Churches culminating in declarations of orthodoxy as an ecumenical body. Paradoxically, the occasion of heresy and schism brought the Church together. In addressing the heterodoxy of errant Christologies, Church leaders gathered in person (or if need be by proxy) to affirm the faith. The declarations of the councils were a restatement of the faith and, importantly, an

affirmation of the development of the understanding of Christianity. In these councils, the Bishop of Rome was looked to for leadership. This was especially clear in the proceeding of the first two ecumenical councils. “It is undeniable that, in the first half of the fifth century, the bishop of Rome enjoyed a strong de facto authority in helping to solve doctrinal and disciplinary disputes” (Meyendorff, 1989, p. 59).

Thereafter, the leadership of the Bishop of Rome was integral to every successive ecumenical Council.<sup>80</sup> That leadership of Rome in the West lasted longer than the union of the Church in the East. The fragmentation of the Church that would occur in the West after the 16<sup>th</sup> century had already occurred in the Churches of the East after the Council Ephesus and the Oriental Orthodox Churches after the Council of Chalcedon (Thompson, 2009, p. 92). Eastern Christianity suffered further transformations with the occupation of the Muslims in the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century and resulted in autocephaly.

Autocephaly would dissolve into phyletism, as in the case of the Bulgarian nationalism. “Not the least legacy of the rise of nationalism was the ecclesiastical division: as the new nations turn into rivals, so the Orthodox of one nationality were set against the other” (Walters, 2002, p. 362). Given the politics of the time, we can ask if autocephaly hindered the continued unity of the Church. Certainly, the aspirations of one Church over the other were present before the fall of Constantinople. <sup>xxviii</sup>

Despite repeated instances of unity under the auspices of the Bishop of Rome, there were those who sought their own, separate, unity. At the Council of Chalcedon, some proposed transferring the leadership of the Church to the Patriarch of Constantinople. They attempted

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<sup>80</sup> It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the topic of papal primacy.



to add the 28<sup>th</sup> Canon explaining their reasoning and proposing the change. In a lengthy letter to the Empress Pulcheria, Pope Leo states the rejection of that proposal based on the understanding that it is contrary to the decrees of Nicaea (Teetgen, 1907, p. 263). <sup>xxix</sup>

Following is a listing of select councils of the Church. In each of these, heterodoxy was identified and judged. Those seen as an Ecumenical Council are seen as binding on the whole Church. Local synods or councils have the authority of the signatories as binding on their Churches and require the participation of the Bishop of Rome to be binding.

### 3.2.3 Selected Councils of the Church

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Major Outcome</b>
325	1st Nicaean Council	First Ecumenical Council	Condemned Arianism and other heresies, formulated Nicaean Creed addressing the Arian heresy.
381	1st Council of Constantinople	Second Ecumenical Council	Condemned Macedonius heresy and reaffirmed Nicaean Creed with additions addressing several heresies (including Marcion, Marcionites, Novatianism, and Donatism)
431	Council of Ephesus	Third Ecumenical Council	Condemned Nestorianism heresy, establish the Patriarch of Constantinople prerogatives of honor after the Bishop of Rome (Canon 3) and affirmed that nothing contrary should be added to the Creed.
451	Council of Chalcedon	Fourth Ecumenical Council	Condemned Monophysitism and established the See of Peter as the Seat of Primacy with no equal
553	2nd Council of Constantinople	Fifth Ecumenical Council	Condemned Neo-Nestorianism and invoked infallibility to protect the Church from errant leadership

680	3rd Council of Constantinople	Sixth Ecumenical Council	Condemned Monothelitesism that was left unchecked by the Patriarch of Constantinople, addressed issues relating to Islam and reaffirmed infallibility to protect the Church from errant leadership - ex cathedra
787	2nd Nicaean Council	Seventh Ecumenical Council	Upheld the papal condemnation of the heresy of Iconoclasm held by bishops in the Eastern Church.
1274	Second Council of Lyons	Council of Union	Proposed dogmatic solutions to the inclusion of the Filioque (acceptance was later repudiated by Andronicus II) and reaffirmed unity of East and West
1445	Council of Florence	Council Affirming Union	Clarified the Filioque as an explanation (to avoid an Arian and Macedonian interpretation), not an addition that is contradictory to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381. All but one of the Eastern bishops agreed to accept this creedal version and declared complete union with Rome.

1483      Local Council      Final Schism

After the final fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Sultan appoints Patriarch of Constantinople who holds a local council that formally abandons the union with Rome in cooperation with the Ottoman Empire. The Bishop of Rome and most Eastern bishops did not participate.

### **3.2.4      Heterodoxy recognized as a differentiation**

With many of the early heresies addressed by Ecumenical Councils, the adherents to these groups continued even after the decree of condemnation. Arianism and Monothelitesism are examples that retained followers long after formal condemnation. For those adhering to the councils, these condemned groups were simply seen as non-Christian and not divisions of the Church. The Pelagian heresy is an example of an error in soteriology that demarcated Christianity from a heretical faith. In Augustine's "Concerning the Proceedings of Pelagius" (written in 417) the false doctrine is pointed out and the Bishop of Hippo invoked his fellow prelates to condemn the faith [loc 254] (Warfield, 1887). A local council (endorsed by Pope Innocent I) formalized that condemnation. Although there was this official condemnation, the group continued and purported to be practicing Christians, thus leading many away from the faith. The Council of Ephesus in 431 invoked the condemnation by the whole ecumenical Church under papal auspices. Yet the school of thought continued into Semi-Pelagian practiced in Gaul led by John Cassian. The adherents to the heresy proposed that sinners could seek God of their own volition without the grace and denied the depravity of fallen humans. This was directly contrary to Catholic Church teachings and strongly denounced by

several popes (Popes Boniface I and Celestine being the most notable). The Synod of Orange in 529, approved by Pope Boniface II, reinstated the Catholic Church's understanding of salvation by grace alone, salvation as undeserved (the canon did not address predestination as later protestors would) (McGoldrick, 2006, pp. 125-129).

The Pelagian heresy is an example of how groups were recognized as not Christian and were condemned for posing as approved members of the Church. In the process of condemnation, the Church gathered and defended its faith, thus becoming unified under the leadership of the Bishop of Rome. The Bishop of Ravenna, Peter Chrysologus, in 451 wrote to Eutyches urging him to accept the acts of the Council of Chalcedon based on the unifying author of the Bishop of Rome. "I exhort you, venerable brother, to submit yourself in everything to what has been written by the blessed Pope of Rome; for Saint Peter, who lives and presides in his own See, gives the true faith to those who seek it" (Fleury, 1842, p. 307).

The Council of Chalcedon (which had the largest number of bishops attending of any Ecumenical Council) saved the East from Monophysitism, which proclaimed that Jesus Christ, who is indistinguishable with the Son, is a singular person and "one hypostasis" in one divine nature (Newman, 1878, p. 155). At the end of the Council of Chalcedon, the bishops confirmed the Bishop of Rome as speaking "in the voice of the Apostle Peter" (Newman, 1878, p. 157).

### **3.2.5 Segregation of unity**

Down through the ages, the Church has separated into divisions. Heterodoxy was recognized as separate from the Church. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century another instance of division had formed in the three "communions" in the unified Church. The Chalcedonian communion

consisted of Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Antioch and the Melkites. The non-Chalcedonian communion was made up of the Coptic, Syrian and Armenian Churches. The communion of the “Church of the East” was formed from the Nestorian Church.

These Church communions were distinguished by theologies and by differences in faith practices. Over time separations within the communions also developed. The main divisive forces in the separations were external governmental politics and interchurch recognition of leadership. We mentioned earlier the effect that the spread of the Ottoman Empire had on the Churches. Of the five original Christian patriarchies, only Rome remained outside the Muslim occupation. The Ottoman Empire did not completely collapse until after World War I [loc 71] (Deans, 1854).

This occupation of traditional Christian lands left only the new missionary territories to the East free of the Ottoman domination. Russia enjoyed complete independence from the traditional Patriarchy of Constantinople that was under the Ottoman. Russia was afforded the freedom to practice the Christian faith openly. The Church of Russia, in the year 1448, was the first to declare independence from its mother Church that was the Church of Constantinople. Later, in 1589, the Russian Orthodox Church installed its own primate as Patriarch of all Russia. It did this without the consent of the mother Church. The manner of Russian autocephaly predisposed it to a sense of nationhood and an ethnic identity. While calling itself the “Third Rome,” Russia did not see itself simply as a transfer of patriarchy. Rather, it was to be an independent church separated from Constantinople. There was no precedent for this. There was only the tradition recognizing the original five Christian Patriarchies. Catholicity was maintained in a communion of faith with the mother Church. This new autocephaly and all of Russia would be self-governing and free from any political

obligations to the mother Church that remained under the millet system of the Ottoman Empire. Originally, Russia was brought into an undivided Christianity. Later, it saw the necessity to separate from that unity of governance, while trying to retain a unity of faith with other Churches. In the canons of Nicaea, there were no obstacles to patriarchal pluralism, only restrictions on jurisdictional overlapping (see Canon 4 and 15) (L'Huillier, 1996).

Within the movement to autocephaly was the undercurrent of phyletism. In the case of Russia, this undercurrent would infuse the whole Russian Church in a reoccurring heresy as nationalism ripped apart the fabric of the Russian Empire. In the early years of the Church, the identity of various churches was clearly distinguished along geographic and ethnic isolations. However, the Roman Empire had begun to erode those isolations. The road system of the Empire allowed travel even to the furthest locations in no more than 30 days. The primary language for the Empire was either Greek or Latin for political or commercial purposes. Citizenship was linked to the singular city of Rome, while residency could be anywhere in the world.

The Bulgarian Church was the first Church to be officially identified by a state in the Balkans and not a region as in the case of Russia. After the Patriarch of Bulgaria declared his Church independent in 1860, the Sultan recognized the new autocephaly of Bulgaria in 1870. However, the imposition of the millet system meant that no Church within the Ottoman Empire was truly independent. Bulgaria was within the territory of Constantinople and its independence was not sanctioned by the Ecumenical Patriarch. The Patriarch of Constantinople declared the Bulgarian Church in schism and excommunicated it in 1872.

The Patriarch of Constantinople used the new term “phyletism” to designate the heresy behind the Bulgarian schism. The Council of 1872 condemned phyletism on the grounds that

is was best to uphold the tradition of refusing the establishment of churches with overlapping jurisdictions<sup>81</sup> (Kitromilides, 2008, p. 240). The Council gave the word phyletism to any act of establishing an ecclesial jurisdiction solely on ethnic or tribal distinctions rather than geographic boundaries.

### **3.2.6 Implications of the Americas**

The movement of nationalism had just begun with the establishment of Bulgaria as an independent state. With the end of the First World War in 1918, four Empires had fallen, Russia, Germany, Austria and the Ottoman. The relationship between nation states and churches had dissolved.

With the Russian Revolution in 1905, nationalist sentiments tainted Orthodox unity. The concept of one faith, one people of God, was replaced with divisions based on nations and political groupings. Russia had taken its own path in autocephaly in 1448. The Churches of the emerging nations demanded their own independence. In the case of Bulgaria, an autocephaly was sought even before nationhood was recognized. The transition to independence did not proceed smoothly (Werth, 2006, p. 79).

The founding of the Americas by the Europeans and Russians opened a new dimension to nationalism. Out of the Americas grew whole new nations. From these new nations many explorers, missionaries and ex-patriots flooded into the “New World.” Because of their affinity for the homeland, most of the Orthodox Christians saw themselves initially as

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<sup>81</sup> This principle is a challenge to the Orthodox Churches in the Americas where there is a mix of national backgrounds in the same geographic area.



diaspora from their mother Church. Over generations however, Orthodox Christians in the Americas explored their own independence. Traditions in the Orthodox Church did not readily help with the questions of autocephaly and overlapping jurisdictions. In addition to this, the Americas became a blend of ethnic groups within a completely new nation. Because of the political separation of church and state in almost all the countries of the Americas, the identity of the Church with local government or political boundaries was not formed.

This section recapped some important traits of each of the original five patriarchies in the early Church. We have traced how the innovation of Russian autocephaly brought divisions into the Church and challenges as geopolitical upheavals occurred globally. The next section will explore how the wisdoms of the early Church Fathers can be understood as a way of maintaining unity within the Church both East and West.

### **3.3 MANY HERESIES, ONE FAITH REMAINS**

The previous section presented how the early Church recognized five Apostolic Patriarchies and how the Bishop of Rome was involved in the leadership of the Church. The unity of the Church was maintained by a series of Church Councils that differentiated heterodoxy and condemned schisms. This section will build on this continuing theme of a call to unity.

The invasion of the Ottoman Empire into the great patriarchies of the East brought about many changes in the administration of the Eastern Church. Taxation of the Church became a hardship for the administration. After 1,000 years of favoritism in the Byzantine Empire, Christianity in the East was shaken to its roots by Islam. However, many of the changes may not have been completely surprising to the people of Constantinople. According to

researchers I. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead, the taxation system and administration structure established by the Ottomans were directly copied from the Byzantine Empire (Woodhead, 1995). The early sultans even took for themselves the emperor's title of 'Caesar' of Rome (New Rome in the case of Constantinople) to complete their absorption of the Byzantine culture (Woodhead, 1995, p. 21).

The removal of the favored status of Christianity in the Empire was a transformation that influenced even the theology of the East. Even before the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the presence of the Ottomans diminished the Church elsewhere in the East. An example of this was the *jizya* (poll tax) on the Coptics that was collected all the way through to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>xxx</sup> Church authority in the East was tainted by the sociopolitical hostility to Christianity within the Ottoman Empire. Accommodations and inventions came into Church practice. Appointment of bishops needed to be sanctioned by the Sultan, an antagonistic political leader who subscribed to a religion that competed for the affections of the populace. Developments in the liturgy and theology were put aside as the Church took on a defensive posture trying to do more than preserve the past; it was struggling to survive.

The status of the Church in the East contrasted with that of the West. The West blossomed with the Renaissance. There came to be a high demand in the West for all things Byzantine. So overwhelming was the demand for Eastern icon writings (often referred to as 'art' in the West), that church interiors were overflowing in icons and statues to the point of distraction. This exuberance later became the fodder for protesters in the West in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Evans, 2004, pp. 546, 547). The love of all things Eastern was not restricted to Christian artifacts only. The developing disunity in the Western Church occasioned the

embrace by some of Eastern militarism towards the Bishop of Rome.<sup>82</sup> As we look back in history, we may neglect to see events in light of what contemporaries could have seen them at the time. There may have been hope with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 that the Empire would rise again and help the East. Many in the East dreamt that what was needed was simply to be faithful to the past and wait for the resurgence of Christianity in the East. Indeed, most at the time did not see even the events of 1054 as a permanent schism between the Eastern and Western Churches (Streeter, 2012, p. 162).

The idea that schisms were not necessarily permanent was spurred on by the succession of Church councils that resolved so many schisms. When Emperor Theodosius II encouraged the bishops to call the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon in 451 addressing the Monophysite teachings, the schisms that resulted were lamentable. However, it too was not thought to be permanent. The followers of Eutyches, for example, did eventually agree with the Church in a unanimous agreement that the Bishop of Rome was primary with no equal, and thus, with patience, ended even that seemingly irretraceable schism [loc 280] (Meinardus, 1999).

Many times, external events complicated schisms to the point of exacerbating their longevity. In the case of the Coptic schism, the Ottoman overlords subjected the Church to stresses that drove them further from reunion. The practice of cheirotonia (paying for ecclesial positions) was instituted and encouraged by the Sultan [loc 1357] (Meinardus,

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<sup>82</sup> Martin Luther preferred the Prince of Islam to the leader of his native Christian nation: “seeing that the Turk is ten times cleverer and more pious than our princes.” This preference for the Ottomans did little to endear the Western Protestors to the Eastern Christians (Helmolt, 1907, p. 815).

1999). This instigated corruption into the Church (a not unwanted effect the Muslims desired). While the West was bold enough to send enthusiastic crusaders to the Far East, Eastern Christians had surrendered themselves in many cases to what they thought would be a temporary situation of Ottoman occupancy [loc 1370] (Meinardus, 1999).

As the Coptics found solidarity in shared perseverance, the Syrian Church accommodated themselves to domestic divisions during occupation. The Malkite, Nestorian, Jacobite and Maronite communities all coexisted, joined by a linguistic and cultural bond despite their differences in ritual and dogma [loc 64] (Gwynn, 2012). The sacramental mystery of baptism was emphasized as a way to maintain accord among the diversity in the Syrian Church [loc 365] (Gwynn, 2012).

The Church in Alexandria took a different strategy. Abba Philemon during the early occupation of the Ottomans and Alexandria left his cloister and quietly taught Christians about the Christian religious life in order to bolster immunity to the temptations of the world and the allurements of the Muslim occupiers [loc 11249] (Corinth, 1782). Rather than militant resistance or object civil disruption, Philemon recommended esthetic pathways to an enlightened Christian spiritual life to maintain Church unity and fight against schisms.<sup>xxxix</sup> Some attempted to redefine biblically based teachings and traditional Church authority to accommodate the political realities of Ottoman occupation. At the end of the Council of Chalcedon in 451, advocates for change proposed Canon 28 that would have transferred Church authority from old Rome to Constantinople (New Rome). This innovation was rejected by the Patriarch of the West <sup>xxxix</sup> and by Eastern Bishops. <sup>xxxix</sup>

### **3.3.1 Rome brings end to an Eastern Schism**

The Bishop of Rome was decisive in resolving the divisive controversy of iconoclasm in the Eastern Church at the Second Council of Nicaea 787 [loc 156] (Leclercq, 2012). Because of contentions over icons in Constantinople, the Council was urged by the Pope and the findings of Second Council of Nicaea to resolve the iconoclast heresy that developed into a full schism in the Eastern Church. The distinction between the worshiping and the honoring of distinguished people of the past by remembering them in their image in an icon or statue was made clear during this council.

While schisms came about because of objections to authority, heresies generated divisions also. The non-Trinitarian heresy of Adoptionism is a good example of a theology that created significant division in the Church. The dogma stating that Jesus became the adopted son of the Father at his baptism was promoted by Elipandus, Archbishop of Toledo and by Felix, Bishop of Urgel in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. These two Bishop supported the dogma of adoption using only biblical texts. Christian tradition however, especially the symbols of Nicaea in Constantinople, make clear that Christianity understood Jesus as the Son of God in a Trinitarian theology.

Adoption went to the heart of the Christian message. Unlike other religions, Christianity believes in the person of Jesus and not a simple collection of sayings or philosophy. Distorting the true nature of the person of Jesus would ripple through the foundations of the Church, including the foundation of its authority. The scholar, FitzSimons Allison, revealed how Adoptionism grasped at controlling beliefs and discouraged unity in the Church. According Allison, basing Christianity solely on the Scriptures, as the Adoptionist did, makes it a religion of control rather than salvation and reduces Christian morality to a set of rules

with no provision for Divine mercy. Adoption, according to Allison, makes human sinfulness a symptom to be treated rather than the selfish act of free will. Rationalism takes the place of divine mystery; religion is replaced by law and unity is never achievable [loc 346] (Allison, 1994). Allison proposes that early heresies were influenced by a Roman culture that used religion for its political aims. Making Caesars into gods was an instrument of political control. In deifying themselves, the Emperors had complete control over the populace in their political, moral and religious life. This forced the unity on the Empire based on the personage of the Emperor. Religion and the Empire became one in the Emperor. This unity of religion and state was challenged when Christianity was introduced. This is one reason why Christianity was at first persecuted by the emperors. As Christianity became more popular, it was eventually given a legal status by the state and the state was subsumed into this new religion [loc 883] (Allison, 1994).

Given the affinity between politics and religion, it is no surprise that heresies sought to gain control of both the state and the Church. Orthodox Christianity was oftentimes in the minority, even at Church councils. As in the case of the heresy of Adoptionism, Orthodox Christianity was at a loss for rebuttal since the heterodoxy based its dogma on the sufficiency of the Scriptures alone [loc 2027] (Allison, 1994). The power of clear thinking and lessons from tradition inspired the councils and the hierarchy about the truth of orthodoxy. Those not wanting to recognize these authorities came into schism with the Church.

The Christian message was challenged by many heresies. In keeping to the theme of Paul's exhortation in second Thessalonians (2:15) to hold firm to traditions given in writing or orally, and in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (11:2) of maintaining traditions, the Church preached the Good News in the Scriptures and as an institution. The inspired

teachings of the Church proclaimed the Good News in fidelity because its bishops are the successors of the Apostles. Unity for the orthodox Christian was maintained in the singularity of that teaching and attested to by the Church Fathers. While the Church held that only the canonical Scriptures were divinely inspired by God, the Holy Spirit did act also within the Church teachings to help inspire all. The teachings of the Church Fathers are of special significance as they give us a glimpse of the early Church and their writings remain as wisdoms, applicable to understanding Christianity today. By convention, the period of the Church Fathers starts immediately after the Apostles and continued through Isadore of Seville in the year 636 in the West and John of Damascus in 749 in the East [loc 261] (Akin, 2010). We find repeatedly in the writings of the Church Fathers a call to unity and a plea for proper authority within the Church. <sup>xxxiv</sup>

This chapter listed how the different local churches responded to schisms and to the particular political situations found in their communities. The Apostles and early Church Fathers stressed unity within the Church. The dogmas of heresies created schisms for which the councils of the Church gave guidance. The hostility of non-Christian governments frustrated the continued unity of the Church for hundreds of years. In the next chapter we see how others worked against Christendom in the West and the divisive acts of self-governance in the East disrupted the unity of the Church both Roman and Greek.

## **4 CHAPTER 4 - CONTEXT OF ECCLESIAL ONTOLOGY**

### **4.1 MANY CHURCHES AMONG MANY NATIONS**

Down through the ages the Church and the Church Fathers called for unity despite the divisions of heresies and schisms. The previous chapter outlined how the Church in the East dealt with the oppression of the Ottoman Empire which disrupted unity. Their approach is more of survival than emphasis on unity. This chapter will present how Christendom developed in the West and how phyletism became a challenge for the autocephalous Churches of the East. In these divisive moments, we see the Church reacting in a unifying effort revealing its essence.

#### **4.1.1 The West develops Christendom**

The feudal system in Europe influenced the perception of Church organization during the Middle Ages. The understanding of what the Church is continued to change during the Renaissance and through the Age of Enlightenment. From the earliest times, Western culture held that honor, fealty, territorial authority and the dignity of governance was to be held in high esteem (Jenkins, 2011, p. 7). This social construct was the glue that held the primitive tribes of Europe together and allowed them to amalgamate into the nation states they eventually became.

With Christianity, the culture of the Middle Ages focused on a loyalty that went beyond earthly kingdoms and understood that even if earthly leaders failed, their religion would endure forever (Jenkins, 2011, p. 14). Collectively in the West, these were considered



foundational to making a transnational culture where most of the populace was Christian. The resulting construct of Christendom was very different from the Eastern concepts of kingship and authority that had close cultural affiliation with the Scriptures.

The coronation of Charlemagne (Charles the Great) was touted as something more than just the installation of another European king. The coronation was done in the idealization of the worldwide organization of the old Roman Empire. Christianity was to achieve a universal friendship that had been written in the Scriptures and taught in Church tradition.

Charlemagne's kingdom was to be the outward organization of this Christian ideal. This earthly kingdom was to support the spiritual kingdom of the Church. This unity of Christians and the support of princes was the pinnacle of medieval idealism. This idyllic social order was destroyed by the reforming efforts of religious protesters in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and philosophic revolutionaries in the 17<sup>th</sup> century [loc 394] (Creighton, 1911).

After the 16<sup>th</sup> century the political geography and cultural landscape changed in Western Europe. As a result, the foundations of Christendom eventually passed away. Supernatural doctrines and moral assumptions either became less relevant or were outright denied by proponents of the Enlightenment (Jenkins, 2011, p. 11). The love of the ideals of the Enlightenment served to intoxicate the West. The new philosophic landscape offered a bright future, filled with hope that the mistakes of the past would not be repeated. However, 500 years later we would see splintered denominations of Christians suffer from the same ills that the Reformation and the Enlightenment meant to prevent.

The Western concept of Christianity remained foreign to the Eastern Church. Of the five ancient patriarchies, only Rome was in the West and it developed the cultural and political structures for a sustained Christendom. With the occupation of the Ottoman Empire, the

Eastern Churches were weakened. The rise of Christendom in the West became a preoccupation to the point that Europe forgot the Crusades and focused on its own religious development. Christianity had lost its Eastern influence with the growing predominance of the West. It was as if Christianity had become solely a Western religion (Jenkins, 2011, p. 23). The Eastern Churches were forgotten and many thought there was only one patriarch, the Bishop of Rome. Even Eastern protesters with their new theologies, ignored the Eastern Christianity in their objections to traditional Christian dogma and authority. The lack of unity was not only from schisms, but it developed out of pure ignorance and neglect (Jenkins, 2011, p. 25).

As Europe expanded into the Americas, the Western Church took a leadership role in this geographic expansion. Governments and the affluent became the first to loosen their allegiance to the principles of Christendom. Politics had weakened the Church's influence and often the rulers of European countries ignored the Church. However, the Western Church put forth many who championed the cause of justice worldwide in the face of colonization. Francisco de Victoria is often called the 'Father of International Law' and is an example of how the Church rose against the abuses of colonization in the Americas (Woods Jr., 2005, p. 137).

Francisco de Victoria was a Dominican priest who fought for the rights and protection of the indigenous people of the Americas. He drew from the Bible and from Church teachings to combat abuses including a focused effort to stop the wars against the indigenous peoples of the Americas (Woods Jr., 2005, p. 149). His task was not easy given the ambitions of European explorers and the decadence of European politics. This was the era that saw Nicolo Machiavelli publish his depraved principles of statesmanship, 'The Prince,' in 1513.

The dissolution of Christendom in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries eventually caused more problems than the new philosophies of the time could attempt to solve. The new order of Europe in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment ages eventually destroyed traditional European culture and ultimately weakened Christianity in the West. The concept of nationhood adhering to a geographic location was something that had become very flexible in beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. Endless wars redrew the boundaries of nations. It became more difficult to be loyal to any particular nation as these boundaries changed and a person's citizenship changed along with it. Eventually, loyalty to country was completely rejected as well as adherence to a common Christendom as politics and then society changed in Western Europe [loc 52] (Welsh, 2008). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, at the height of the Enlightenment period, nations were at war with themselves, governments fell, peace was interrupted in every part of society and cultural legacies were destroyed. All the while, under the Ottoman Empire, the Orthodox Church did not experience the drastic changes brought on by the Enlightenment. The wars of political philosophy, such as the American and French revolutions, did not occur in the Orthodox world under the Ottomans. Some understand that the East-West divide of Europe was an innovation of the Enlightenment by which Western Europe attempted to project itself as philosophically superior (Bideleux, 2007, p. 78). This left Western Europe without its Eastern heritage. "The Enlightenment fostered and propagated new and deeply condescending and demeaning Western perceptions of - and attitudes towards - the eastern half of Europe" (Bideleux, 2007, p. 79).

While the Church in the East endured schisms, such as the separation of the Coptic Church, it also suffered from the loss of favor from a government after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The Church in the East attempted to solve some of its governance problems with the adoption of autocephaly. This resulted in repeated divisions in the East and

a slowing of development caused by rivalries among the Churches. A growing opposition to the Church in the West developed as colonialization of the New World began. Secular avarice overshadowed medieval religious fervor. Protesters focused on the Church in their call for change. It turned out that preaching for changes in Christianity was easier than changing the hearts of colonizers and people of power. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century new denominations broke out of the previously united Christendom of the West. These denominations were separated by fundamental differences in governance, theology and practice. Church teachings on morality and the social good were ignored as myopic religious dissent proved easier to gather adherents than the rekindling of ancient religious principles. New and different were often assumed always to be better in a new world landscape. The Church had survived persecutions from the outside. However, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the discovery of the Americas, both the Eastern and the Western Churches eventually found themselves in division. In both cases, the ultimate ruptures were from internal weaknesses. Despite the divisions of both East and West, hope remains. The underlying principles of Christian unity remain undisturbed. Though occupying formally Christian lands, not even Islam (which suffered from divisions within itself) could generate a unity within a religion that the Christian Church had achieved. Western Christendom was exemplary of Christian unity. Eastern perseverance was a model of steadfast adherence to ancient principles [loc 173] (Welsh, 2008).

#### **4.1.2     The challenge of phyletism**

In a local Synod held in Constantinople in 1872, a division was made to condemn the heresy that previously had no name. At that Senate, the patriarch of Constantinople rejected

the ecclesiastical racism, referring to it as ‘ethno-phyletism’ (commonly referred to simply as phyletism).<sup>xxxv</sup>

The case before the Synod of Constantinople in 1872 was the Bulgarian schism. In 1870, the Ottoman Sultan and Abdulaziz Oglu Mahmud II issued firman that separated Bulgarian Christians and established an independent Bulgarian Exarchate. This was in response to the desire of some Bulgarians for the recognition of their own culture and their demand that services be in their vernacular language. This rearranged the territory of the Church of Constantinople along clearly ethnic and national divisions. The action was to appease the Christians in the Bulgarian millet and brought a swift reaction from Constantinople. In reaction to this, Patriarch Anthimos VI of Constantinople called for a synod in 1872. Patriarch Sophronios IV of Alexandria, Patriarch Cyril II of Jerusalem, Patriarch Hierotheos of Antioch and others attended. The Synod called the separation a heresy using the term “phyletism” and excommunicated the Bulgarians.<sup>83</sup>

Issues of inter-Orthodox rivalries were raised in the Bulgarian Schism. Based on the canon that there were not to be more than one bishop in a diocese and that the definition of diocese was assumed along national and ethnic borders, the reaction of Patriarch Anthimos seem understandable. However, the Orthodox was unprepared for the new political situation in the world. The American and French revolutions redefined nationalism. The American experience especially put into question the idea of an ethnic group being associated with a

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<sup>83</sup> Ironically, in 1922 the Patriarch of Constantinople, Meletius IV, violated this very principle when he established a Greek jurisdiction for the Americas and thus he opened the Americas and Western Europe to be claimed as jurisdictions by a multitude of Eastern bishops.

particular national identity. The Orthodox Church in the East had to adjust to incompatible nationhood with Ottomans. The Russian Orthodox Church in particular would have to accommodate an even more antagonistic national overlord with the Soviet Union. The Orthodox Church has never regained an organizational strength as witnessed in the Pan-Orthodox Council of 2016 which dealt ineffectively with the aftermath of the post-Soviet political landscape.<sup>84</sup>

In the case of the Bulgarian Schism, the jurisdictions of the Bulgarian Exarch and the Patriarch of Constantinople overlapped. The Patriarch was right to call into question this breach of canon law.<sup>xxxvi</sup> The identity of any territorial church based on ethnicity or nationality was forbidden as a heresy of phyletism. The difference between a declaration of autocephaly and phyletism became less than clear as the Enlightenment political philosophy of the 18th century generated new nations.<sup>85</sup> A resolution of what it means to be a particular Orthodox Christian became unclear as nationhood changed and ethnic groups integrated within singular territories. Christendom in Western Europe did not suffer this identity crisis because of the absence of autocephalous churches because neither nationhood nor ethnic origin dictated a person's denomination in the West.

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<sup>84</sup> Russkiy Mir (Russian World) has grown into a mindset of some Orthodox claiming that territories that were previously under Soviet rule should remain within the autocephaly Russian Orthodox Church.

<sup>85</sup> In retrospect, perhaps we may want to ask whether the declaration of autocephaly by the Russians in 1448 had any separatist motivations based on ethnic distinction from the Byzantines and nationalist interests to disengage from Constantinople.

This section presented an historical contrast between East and West. Political forces influenced both and yet their responses were very different. The principle factor in this was the presence of the Ottomans in the East and the formation of Christendom in the West. In the next section there is background information on the religious significance of schisms.

## **4.2 WESTERN CHRISTENDOM**

This section explores the unity of the bishops in the Christian Church both East and West. As a singular unit, especially in councils, the Church interacted with state. Despite external political forces and interference from non-Christian governments, the Church both East and West maintained its integrity.

Christendom may also be understood as a society (or at least a nation) that is populated predominantly by Christians and incorporates the doctrines of the majority Christian sect in its lifestyle. It does not necessarily follow that there is unity within society regarding Christian doctrines. Christendom does not require unanimity in each ecclesial governance or dogma. After the Edict of Milan in 313, Christendom developed within the Roman Empire. The Christian Church before that time had known schisms, heresies and severe persecution. These did not cease as Christendom dawned. Indeed, reminiscent Arianism, as an example, continues into the modern age.

Complaints about divisions in the Church are found in the writings of Paul.<sup>86</sup> Early leaders of the Church also called out for unity.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Pope Clement I recalled the very words

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<sup>86</sup> Examples of Paul's call to unity can be found in his letters to the Corinthians and to the Ephesians.

of Jesus<sup>87</sup> in his admonition to avoid disunity. It seemed that discords had grown worse since the time of Paul. <sup>xxxviii</sup> The African Pope Miltiades, Bishop of Rome (died 314), saw Emperor Constantine issue the edict of Milan in 313, giving Christianity legal status within the Roman Empire. He received the palace of Empress Fausta (referred to as the Lateran Palace) as the residence of the papal administration. He presided over the Lateran Council, called to address the schism with the Church of Carthage, where he condemned Donatus Magnus and the teaching of the necessity for rebaptism for those who had apostatized (McBrien, 2000, pp. 24-25). From this very dawn of Christendom, schism was a rift in the Church and would be condemned repeatedly by subsequent councils.

Africa led early Christianity in the fight for unity. Christianity came to Ethiopia with the initial ministry of Philip.<sup>88</sup> Alexandria was the center for one of the foremost catechetical schools in the early Church. Clement of Alexandria was one of the school's most famous teachers and Origen was perhaps its most famous pupil [loc 562] (Akin, 2010). Optatus of Milevis was another African leader of the early Church. He fought against the Donatist heresy and his writings helped overcome that schism [loc 2490] (Akin, 2010). Cyprian of Carthage promoted unity beginning at the most grassroots level. He encouraged Christians to be bound together in union with their priests and their bishop. He urged Christians to avoid people who egotistically led Christians away from union with their bishop [loc 2491] (Akin, 2010).

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<sup>87</sup> Matthew 18:6, Mark 9:42, Luke 17:2.

<sup>88</sup> Acts of the Apostles 8:26-40.



With Africa's constant call for unity in the Church, it deferred leadership of the entire Church to the Bishop of Rome. It was in the one cathedra, in the city of Rome, where Peter was its first Bishop, and that unity was to be preserved [loc 2741] (Akin, 2010). The Patriarchy of Africa did not place itself above any other Patriarchy [loc 2801] (Akin, 2010). Jerome of Stridon (Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus), who studied at the Catechetical School of Alexandria, became an outspoken critic of both heresies and schisms from Rome.

Christendom would have been impossible if unity had not been stressed in the Church from the very beginning. Institutional unity and orthodoxy were the result of contemporary cultural values according to Rebecca Lyman. Lyman postulated that Platonic proofs for the superiority of Christianity are rooted in the preservation of Rome's political schema and ecclesiastical organization of the Christian Church. Lyman argues that fighting heresy and schisms had persuasive social and political values (Lyman, 2003).<sup>89</sup> Lewis Ayres points out that it is important to remember that, despite a pragmatic political impetus for an insistence on unity, this understanding should only supplement, not replace our exegesis of the sacred (Ayres, 2007, p. 161). The cultural context of Christian dogma and the political expediency of the Church governance do not directly indicate secular influence. Rather, as in the case of Christendom, we should always look to see how the Church made its impression on culture and politics of the time.

The debates within Christianity after 313 shaped the culture perhaps as much as the culture may have influenced the debates themselves. Certainly, we can suggest that the

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<sup>89</sup> Also see Lyman, Rebecca. "ARIANS AND MANICHEES ON CHRIST." *The Journal of Theological Studies*, New Series, 40, no. 2 (1989): 493-503.

limitations of our particular language or cultural philosophy contextualize the Christian internal dialogue. The language and cultures of the Christian environment also enrich that same discourse. The languages of Greek and Latin plus the Hellenistic philosophies and contemporary political structures were models used by the early Church to express their faith. It must be kept in mind that over time, these same instruments of language and culture evolved into the language of Christian theological tradition and its Scriptures. Contemporary philosophies and social structure became the way of explaining the faith and were enveloped into the structure of the Church.<sup>90</sup> The Church Fathers famously took proto-Christian cultural implements (such as language and philosophy) refined them and put them into the service of the faith. This process of transforming social context, transformed the “People of the Way” into a recognized group called Christians.<sup>91</sup> The eventual, and more complete, transformation of culture, the Church and politics of these “people” transformed into an amalgamation of Church and state called ‘Christendom.’ We struggle at times to explain the continuity of Christian beliefs in these developments (Ayres, 2007, p. 163). The Church of the Apostles is the same Church of the early Church Fathers (and even the Church in our modern age). It is important to understand in our history as Church, that it is a living faith, innovations may

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<sup>90</sup> We must remember that Jesus most likely spoke Aramaic as His usual language and His words were later remembered and translated into the Greek language Gospels.

<sup>91</sup> Acts of the Apostles 9:2.

neglect fidelity and conservative practices do not guarantee orthodoxy.<sup>92</sup> Many practices and understandings of the early Church led to the heresies that were condemned by the councils.

In explaining how God's peace is broken by schism, Optatus of Milevis urges his readers to consider how peace among Christians would resolve disagreements (Vassall-Phillips, 1917, p. 4). For Optatus peace was the foundation for the unity among all Christians. "For Peace in unity joined together the peoples of Africa and of the East, and the rest beyond the sea, and this unity itself, through the representation of all its members, made the Body of the Church solid" (Vassall-Phillips, 1917, p. 94).

#### **4.2.1 Schisms as repudiations of the secular**

After Emperor Theodosius I forbade pagan worship and favored the Christian religion in 388, citizens of Rome began to identify the Empire as the best means of expressing Christianity.<sup>93</sup> The commingling of Church and state may have clouded the reality of Christians proclaiming the Kingdom that it is not of this world (John 18:36).

There is, however, strong evidence that the relationship between the state and the Church was more of a repudiation, than a simulation. Peter Iver Kaufman draws on the events leading to early schisms to support this view. The generation that experienced Emperor Theodosius'

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<sup>92</sup> Even in the Acts of the Apostles, we see developments in ministry with appointment of deacons, the debate over proscriptions of the Jewish laws and the election of apostolic successors.

<sup>93</sup> This proposition is expounded by Robert Markus, "The Secular in Late Antiquity," in "Les frontières du profane dans l'antiquité tardive", ed. Éric Rebillard and Claire Sotinel (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2010).

blessing of the Church, also had scars from the persecutions of the earliest Church. While emperors may have thought that wholehearted subscription to Christianity was politically beneficial, the common Christian was still hesitant to forget the bitter past of the Empire. The slightest cause to separate the Church from the Empire gained rapid popularity according to Kaufman (Kaufman, 2017). Thus, the Donatist and the Arians, both of which garnered the disdain of the Emperor, may have found impetus among Christians in the rebellious politics that instigated a schism with the Church favored by the Emperor. The fact that the Emperor's endorsement did not reconcile the parties is significant to Kaufman. <sup>xxxix</sup>

While the secular and the state may have been united for Constantine and subsequent emperors, the superiority of the Church was retained by most Christians especially in the Bishop of Rome. Among the common citizens of Rome in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Christians were still under suspicion. The failure to attend the required worship of the pagan gods was seen by non-Christians as the cause of any particular personal ill and all the ills in the Empire (Kaufman, 2017, p. 209). As catechumens were told the story of the Church, the struggle of the martyrs became glorified. Christians were not to forget that the Empire was not to be trusted. Prayerful insurgents and peaceful resistance were prized virtues of the martyrs. Ignoring the heretical roots of schismatic rebellions, any movement that was an abjuration to the Empire, honored the saints and purified Christians of many evils, civil and ecclesial (Kaufman, 2017, p. 210). This distorted religious exuberance for the denunciation of even ecclesiastic authority reemerged in the protests of the 16<sup>th</sup> century against the Church and the state in parts of Europe.

When Rome fell in 476, the Germanic Odoacer became the first non-Roman to rule the city. At that time, Christians were spread throughout Europe and beyond. Christians became

citizens of these new nations that grew out of the old Empire. The Eastern Empire, however, would not succumb to the invasions of the Ottomans until 1453. In Constantinople, the marriage of church and state had more than a millennium to mature.

Byzantine emperors had a tradition of protecting the Church dating from the time of Constantine. Emperors had invoked councils, urging bishops to retain orthodoxy and assert authority. The Emperor presided at Church councils, was involved in the election of bishops, could appoint (or remove) the patriarch of Constantinople, could incense the altar in the Hagia Sophia, give sermons and was the only layman allowed in the bema of the church (Skedros, 2017, p. 221). The Emperor was seen as the Defender of the Faith (a title also given to Henry VIII of England who retained it for himself after founding the Church of England) (Skedros, 2017, p. 223). As the rift in the Church between East and West widened, the Emperor was called upon to be the defender of Eastern Christianity (Skedros, 2017, p. 228). Eastern Christianity became political in its identity. When the Eastern Empire finally fell, the Eastern Church moved its allegiance away from the West. The Russians, for example, made Moscow the third Rome. In the East, the Church was coterminous with the state unlike the West that had a diversity of nations and ethnic groups under one ultimate authority, the Bishop of Rome. In the struggle for orthodoxy, the East defended its dogma in relation to the West, declaring what it was not, rather than what it strove to be (Skedros, 2017, p. 227).

As mentioned in chapter two, Islam weakened Eastern Christianity. However, that was not the only force that robbed the vitality of the East. Vandal Arianism had weakened the

Church in Africa before the Muslims had arrived. Their heretical Christology had predisposed the people to question their faith and more easily accept Islam.<sup>94</sup>

The failure of the Byzantine military campaigns to regain North Africa in 442 left the people there without communication with other Christians worldwide. North Africa was on its way to becoming lost to Constantinople in formulating a separate Christianity of its own. The East suffered further internal divisions early on. The Syrian Orthodox Church (sometimes referred to as the Nestorians or the Jacobites) found itself estranged from Constantinople. The Coptic Church of Egypt became a distinct church after the Council of Ephesus in 431 and a completely separate entity after the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The Second Council of Nicaea in 787 is considered in the East to be the last of the Ecumenical Councils. After this, religious authority in the East became more decentralized as new nations arose especially after 1453. This further frustrated talks between the East and the West. The East divided into major Churches with the partitions of nations. The culture of Byzantium was revered, but not its authority. The concept of the “economy” of salvation allowed some flexibility in its ambiguity, allowing for some reduction in disagreements within Eastern orthodoxy. Yet, the Eastern Church was not tolerant of heterodoxy (Cameron, 2014, p. 109).

With such an intimacy between Church and state, Arnold Toynbee suggests the developments in the East be understood as creating an Orthodox civilization in contrast to the development in the West of Christendom (Toynbee, 1948, p. 169). In the East, the civil government had become the preserver of Christian society and represented Divine power in

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<sup>94</sup> See page 4, Speel, C. J. (1960) “The Disappearance of Christianity from North Africa in the Wake of the Rise of Islam.” *Church History*. Cambridge University Press, 29(4), pp. 379–397. doi: 10.2307/3161925.).

its enforcement of ecclesial canons [loc 4055] (Baynes, 2014). The glory of Byzantium enraptured the Christians of the East creating a civilization. In the West, the destitute Empire became a scourge and people sought refuge in the Church instead, making the Church their source of even temporal hope [loc 4061] (Baynes, 2014). Eventually, the Church and state became one spread throughout several cultures. Even though the East and the West had met in councils, they were very different in how they saw the outcome of each of the councils. Both East and West may have been “conservative” in their orthodoxy, yet the applications of their beliefs in the life of the Church were polar opposites from the very first Council of Nicaea. <sup>xl</sup>

For the Eastern Church, debates on the Trinity and the person of Christ are highlights in history. These happened early in the Church and left a legacy so bright that much of what followed is only a shadow. The Councils of the Church returned the faithful to the Church and yet East and West drifted apart. There was a fusion between Church and state in the East [loc 18990] (Adeney, 2013). In the West, there was a spirit of independence from the Church leadership that invoked “pastoral” strategies even to heretical matters [loc 1905] (Adeney, 2013). Each age of the Western Church saw developments in theology and social involvement. The East had different experiences. <sup>xli</sup>

The Western Church was shaped by external forces, such as the invasion of Rome by the barbarians. The East too was influenced by cultures outside of Constantinople. The entire iconoclast controversy may have been influenced by the practices of Islam and not by internal Christian theology [loc 2625] (Adeney, 2013). Perhaps the most momentous event in Western Christendom and Orthodox society was the dissolution of unity between Eastern and Western

Christianity. That dissolution saw one Church emphasizing defense of the ancient symbols and the other Church focusing on maintaining ancient universality.

The contributors to the rent in Christianity are many. A personal quarrel between two bishops, implications as to the title of authority and the definition of Christian symbols are all major issues. There are also less-recognized developments that were disruptive of unity. The Greek East and the Latin West were next of kin racially. Over time, they became rivals and then less and less connected, especially with the occupation of the Ottomans [loc3440] (Adeney, 2013). Next, the two empires dissolved in completely different ways. The West was the first to be lost to multiple invaders, handing the Roman culture to different peoples to be dissected and parted out as each desired. The East collapsed in a final moment and its culture assimilated by a competing religion. In the West churches continue to be built after the fall. In the East, churches were destroyed. Both East and West endured atrocities. Church Council, after Church Council was attended with the hopes of union being accomplished. The final betrayal of that hope came from within the Church at the urging of a Sultan. Scholarius, who had insisted on unity with the West, became its opponent with the encouragement of a Muslim conqueror who despised anything Roman [loc 4190] (Adeney, 2013). The next section details how this Eastern Christian society migrated to Russia and continued is dogmatic conservatism with a vehement rejection of any union.

#### **4.3 MOSCOW AS THE THIRD ROME**

The previous section presented how divisions in the Church were often grounded in political motivations rather than a theological difference. This section is an investigation into how the Orthodox Church attempted to be conservators of the Christian tradition and yet



neglected the call for unity. This section will start with a condensed presentation on how some in the Western Church developed an argument that defined the whole Church to the exclusion of the Orthodoxy and how the Orthodox precluded Rome as any kind of Church at all.

Disunity in the Church community has been a plague from the time of the very first Christians. Every generation has fought against division in the Christian community. One of the early Bishops of Rome, Clement, had to remind his flock of the evils of schisms.

“Every kind of faction and schism was abominable in your sight. You mourned over the transgressions of your neighbors: their deficiencies you deemed your own. You never grudged any act of kindness, being ‘ready to every good work.’ [from Titus 3:1] Adorned by a thoroughly virtuous and religious life, you did all things in the fear of God. The commandments and ordinances of the Lord were written upon the tablets of your hearts” [from Proverbs 7:3] [loc 106] (Clement, 1885).

The See of St. Peter has participated in the life of the Eastern Church from the very beginning. St. Peter himself was consulted in the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). At the first Council of Nicaea, Sylvester I participated. As the Eastern and Western Church drifted apart, some in the Western Church came to their own understanding of what it meant to be the Christian Church. Some in the West juxtaposed themselves opposite of the Eastern Church formulating a false dilemma that if the Western Church was the true Church, the Eastern was not.<sup>95</sup> This informal fallacy tainted the understanding of what it meant to be a Church. The

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<sup>95</sup> Restating the claims of the heretics into a false paradox had worked for the Church many times (for example, for St. Ambrose of Milan in his attack on the Arians). In defending the Orthodox view of the “generation of the Son of God.” Ambrose restated the error of the opposition in such a way that he imposed a false dilemma on their argument (Williams, 2017, p. 141).

Western Church has repeatedly insulted the dignity of the East especially in regard to the mysteries of the sacraments, by establishing missionary parishes within Eastern dioceses (eparchies). Missionaries arrived in the East as if they were bringing Christianity for the first time to pagans. This proselytizing exhibited not only a misunderstanding of the Eastern Church, but also gave the impression of Western arrogance. It was as if there were two faiths in rivalry when the Western Roman Church built parishes in the East.

The causes of Church divisions are varied. Of the divisions they grew out of heterodoxy, the resulting schisms are perhaps the worst. Yet one of the more persistent of divisions is those rooted in disenchantment with Church authority. In many cases, the reluctance to subscribe to a particular authority only leads rogue groups to establish their own structure of supreme governance. The disenfranchisement between Byzantine East and Roman West had roots both in dogma and governance issues. The division has persisted for years. It is interesting to note that the divisions in the West with its perpetuating protests against Rome, has largely ignored the Byzantine Church in the East. Little, if any, literature of these protesters addressed the theology of the Eastern Church, what little contact there was with the Eastern Church, was unproductive for the Western protesters. <sup>xlii</sup>

Philip Melanchthon, a Lutheran reformer working with Martin Luther as a theologian, wrote to Patriarch Joasaph II of Constantinople in 1570 suggesting an Orthodox and Lutheran collaboration against Rome. Melanchthon included a copy of the Augsburg Confession, translated into Greek. There was no response from the Patriarch at first. Later, under the new patriarchy of Jeremiah II, Jacob Andreæ, a professor at the University of Tübingen wrote an

exposé beginning in 1573 to the Patriarch asking for an official response to the Lutheran propositions. In 1576 after consulting on the topic during a local synod held in Bethlehem and gaining unanimous approval for his proposed response to the Germans, Patriarch Jeremiah II of Constantinople categorically denounced every tenant of the Lutheran doctrine. The Lutheran cause was abandoned (MURAV'EV, 1842, p. 286).

The prestige of the Patriarch of Constantinople was challenged by the declaration of Russian autocephaly. Asserting its independence, Moscow flaunted itself as the Third (and, it added: final) Rome. In doing so, it did not recant its relationship with the other Churches. Rather, Moscow installed itself as successor to the obsolete position of Constantinople and the entire Byzantine Empire. In the innovation of autocephaly, Moscow grabbed the heritage of Rome away from Constantinople and old Rome itself.

From pre-Christian times, Rome had fused religion and politics into one society. This merging escalated with the appointment of the first Emperor, Augustus Caesar (Gaius Octavius Thurinus) in 27 B.C. His ascension also brought about the start of the touted Pax Romana. With “peace” there would be unity. Historian Cyril Toumanoff points out that at the dawn of Christianity, there was a view that Christians belonged to two desperate worlds. Christians saw themselves as in two distinct societies that are at warfare with each other. There is the spiritual society of the Church whose very being was unity and universality and then there was the temporal society of the state whose existence was the Empire (Toumanoff, 1955, p. 413).

When Constantine decreed tolerance and Christianity quickly became a favorite religion, the concept of a dual Christian society morphed into the singular religious culture of the Eastern Byzantine Empire. There was no longer a need to “coexist” with the Empire. The

Empire had become subsumed into the religion of Christianity. A completely new variant of Christian society was introduced into the East. Just as the Empire of Rome had appropriated pagan religions, so the Eastern Byzantine Empire appropriated Christianity into a singular society (Toumanoff, 1955, p. 417).

The idea of a universal Christian Church was tainted by the ideals of the Roman Empire. The Church's term "catholic" implies universal, applicable to all. The Roman Empire was to be universal also, but in a very different way. The social benefits and laws of the Empire would be applied throughout the Empire, to everyone equally. This universal application of citizenship, without ethnicity, appealed to foreigners. Citizenship in Rome gave entitlements (and presumably responsibilities) anywhere in the Empire. Ethnicity did not matter, only political subscription to the singular religion and politics of Rome mattered. The Byzantines elected to retain the pre-Christian singular society with Christianity being recognized as the religion of the state. <sup>xliii</sup>

This Eastern 'oikoumene' made the temporal world able to determine the spiritual realm. Under this schema, the Bishop of the "Third Rome" could see himself not only as the successor of the Patriarch of Constantinople, but also the heir of the now (presumably) obsolete Bishop of the "First Rome". Though continuing to assert its position of privilege, Constantinople was relegated to an estranged relationship because of Russian monophysitism and eventually by the occupation of Islam in the former Byzantine Empire's capital. With Russian autocephaly, Byzantine Christianity had been tainted with the heresy of phisitism and any attempt at reunion would first have to overcome this blatant corruption. <sup>xliv</sup>

The idea that the East would join in union with the West was problematic for the Russians. Progress was in one direction; first, there was old Rome, then there was the second

Rome in Constantinople. Now there would be Moscow, the “Third Rome”. The Russian Church wanted to incorporate the ecclesial culture of Constantinople. This included what they understood to be a fundamental element, a Christian Emperor not associated with old Rome.<sup>xlv</sup>

The Mongols with their Genghisid Empire had created a sort of isolation between Russia and West.<sup>96</sup> As the West became distracted as it asserted itself over the planet, Russia became emboldened as it came into its own political power after the Mongols were defeated. Russia had everything required for “true” Christianity. They did not need the Roman Catholics or even the reformers of the West. The Grand Duke Basil II of Muscovy rejected the Union of Florence. The attempt at union by the Roman Church only served to alienate Russia further from Constantinople. Cyril Toumanoff concluded that the Russians faith in Constantinople and its orthodoxy was shaken by the Council of Florence. The people of Moscow had a disdain for both Constantinople and Rome. Many in Russia saw the final fall of Constantinople in 1453 as a sort of divine punishment for the defection of Constantinople at the Union of Florence. Constantinople had gone into corruption the same way as old Rome. Only Moscow remained as the sanctuary for Christianity (Toumanoff, 1955, p. 435).

By placing Moscow as the receiver of the seat of all Christianity, Russia saw itself as moving into a world leadership position. This added to the prestige of the blossoming Russian Empire. The Grand Duke of Muscovy, John II’s, marriage to the “heiress” Zoe-Sophia Paleolognina (niece to the last Byzantine Emperor) in 1472 set the stage for Russian “inheritance” of Byzantium. The conversion of the Hagia Sophia into a mosque was the

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<sup>96</sup> This isolation from the West occurred again with the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1922.

physical inspiration for the Church of the Virgin Mary in Moscow to be the location for Christian ordinations. To maintain the faith, Moscow was to be the Third Rome.

Moscow now saw itself as having the solemn duty of being the administer of Orthodox Christianity. Just as the Roman Empire spread throughout the world, so would Orthodoxy and the Russian Empire. The whole world was to be under the influence of this Third Rome (Toumanoff, 1955, p. 446). This differentiation from Rome (First and Second) often comes in the form of phyletism. Rather than affirming their contributions, Russian Orthodoxy often identified itself as the keeper of traditions, even if it was outside the context of previous historical traditions. Moscow was not one of the five original Apostolic Churches. This complete transfer of Christianity to the Third Rome was to bring all that was best of Christianity to Moscow leaving behind corruption and heresies. There was a certain sense of self-righteousness in Russian orthodoxy.<sup>xlvi</sup> Aside from this mindset, there has developed institutional impediments to any Orthodox dialogue. John Panteleimon Manoussakis lists the lack of interpersonal communications as a major hurdle in Western dialogue with the Orthodox Church. (Manoussakis, 2013, p. 233). While the Orthodox seem more democratic (especially in their Sobors), they reduce the purpose of their gatherings to a singularity, forcing dissenters into a posture of schism (Manoussakis, 2013, p. 233). The example of “Balkanization” and the treatment of the diaspora today, betray ongoing ethnophyletism. The “endless divisions of autocephalies” (Manoussakis, 2013, p. 239), lethargic pastoral theology and fear of recognizing the efficiency of the primus in personal dialogue, all are seen as being less than helpful in even beginning the conversation.

This section described how some in the West describe the Church to exclude the East. With the Russian attempts at being conservatories of Christianity, the Eastern Church grew

apart from the West. As the political environment changed in Rome and Constantinople, the two became even more separated. Neglecting the call for unity that had been echoed in the early Church, Moscow, the Third Rome, took it upon itself to be the leader in the Christian Church in a new era that followed the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The next section will review the ecumenical relations between East and West and will recap the attempts at reunion in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries that brought new hope for unity in the Church.

#### **4.4 INDEPENDENT REUNIONS, NEW RELATIONS**

The previous section outlined how both the Churches in the East and in the West admitted innovations that have been instrumental in schisms. The heresy of phyletism is imbued in the autocephaly of the Eastern Church. The informal fallacy in understanding of Church is betrayed in the proselytism of the Western Church. This chapter presents how these Churches in schism have, nonetheless, existed in an ontological relationship to one another.

The first Council of Nicaea sanctioned regional churches but did not give guidance as to the establishment of new churches.<sup>xlvi</sup> Nor did the Council suggest any impediments to the establishment of new regional churches. Of note in the sixth canon of the first Council of Nicaea, is the lack of an accounting of all five major Churches (Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem). Only Rome, Alexandria and Antioch are specifically mentioned. Missing is a description of the complete territory of any Church or ecclesial territory. The “Eternal City” of Rome was the seat to an expansive Empire that included all five Churches. While the people during the Council of Nicaea knew that borders could change, the Empire still had hopes of expansion and few contemplated the end of the

Empire.<sup>97</sup> With the notion of stability being socially acceptable, the Empire was at the service to the cause of Church unity at the Council.

Amid this highly centralized Empire, there was a form of Church authority based on the local congregation. The local bishop was the ultimate authority for his diocese. Emperor Constantine saw congregating these bishops in a Council as a way of resolving factions in the Church as a whole.<sup>98</sup> Constantine did not impose a format for generating a definitive resolution of the heresy that was at issue during the Council. Rather, the Emperor urged open presentations from both sides of the Arian debate. It was hoped that some sort of consensus would decide a correct outcome. However, purely democratic voting did not work out in the Council. In the end, the Emperor had to interject his guidance.<sup>99</sup> Simple episcopal conciliarism did not work. This experience would add to the ambiguity in the declarations of

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<sup>97</sup> Constantine had only recently welcomed Christianity into the Empire and there was great optimism in the Empire with the founding of Constantinople. The battle of Chrysopolis had just been won in 324, consolidating the Empire. See "Copy of An Imperial Letter commanding a Second Synod to be held with a view to the healing of all divisions between the bishops" page 325, *The History of the Church by Eusebius*, translated by G.A. Williamson, Penguin Books London 1965 (Eusebius, 1965, p. 325).

<sup>98</sup> See "Copy of An Imperial Letter commanding a Second Synod to be held with a view to the healing of all divisions between the bishops" page 325, *The History of the Church by Eusebius*, translated by G.A. Williamson, Penguin Books London 1965 [page 325] (Eusebius, 1965).

<sup>99</sup> In the frenzy of debate, the Emperor had to interject his influence: "As it happened, however, they were not left to their own devices, for Constantine immediately intervene," Page 7, Grant, Robert M. "Religion and Politics at the Council at Nicaea." *The Journal of Religion* 55, no. 1 (1975): 1-12. (Grant, 1975).



the Council regarding autocephaly in the future. The most poignant example of this is after the final fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the replacement of the Christian emperors by Islamic Sultans.

An early conflict in a declaration of autocephaly is the declaration of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1448 when it gave itself total canonical and administrative independence in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan (and, later, several former Soviets territories with the inclusion of the dysphoria in the Americas).<sup>100</sup> The bishops were confronted with a move to independence by the Balkan Church that was underwritten by the Sultan. No Emperor sanctioned the declaration of independence of the Russian Church. The Balkan Schism, created by its declaration of independence, and the subsequent Synod of Constantinople in 1872, rejected the Balkan move and generated the announcement of phyletism as a heresy.

While we might understand that a council of Bishops is in no need of an Emperor's endorsement, there is the tradition of emperors intervening and even instigating councils. There is also a tradition of deference to this additional authority of the councils. Emperor Constantine the first together with the Bishop of Rome called for the first Council of Nicaea. Emperor Constantine VI and Empress Irene together with Pope Hadrian I called together the Second Council of Nicaea (in promoting the Western Catholic doctrine regarding the use and veneration of images). There has not been a declaration of autocephaly promoted by a Byzantine Emperor or by the Bishop of Rome. Even though the Russian Church was directly under the authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople, it declared independence without permission (Obolensky, 1957, p. 23). The Russian Orthodox Church spontaneously declared

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<sup>100</sup> This arrangement would later create issues of subsequent autocephaly in the Ukraine and in America.

its autocephaly in 1448. In doing so, it did not have the blessing of any patriarch, East or West.<sup>xlvi</sup>

#### **4.4.1 Independent reunions**

The Union of Brest 1596 started a new chapter in East-West relations and was a resurgent manifestation of the unifying essence of the Church. Several bishops met in the city of Brest to conclude a long-negotiated relationship with the Bishop of Rome. The Ruthenian Catholics in the Transcarpathian Region negotiated a union that allowed them to retain their Byzantine Rite and be fully autonomous as a "Particular" Church.<sup>101</sup> Notable in this union are the articles that allow the Eastern Catholics to retain their liturgical practices, calendar and theology without compromise. Rome did not insist on Western traditions or Western practices. These included the allowance of married priests in the East, the omission of the filioque and liturgies in the vernacular.

There have been several more resurgences of the unifying nature of the Church. In the town of Uzhhorod in western Ukraine on April 24, 1646, several Eastern priests and their parishioners were welcomed into the Catholic Church. In 1664, another union happened, this time in Mukačevo, welcoming Eastern Orthodox from other parts of the Ukraine and the Hungarian diocese of Hajdúdorog into the Catholic family of Churches. With another union in Romania in 1713, an entire region of the Eastern Church had joined in union with

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<sup>101</sup> Not all Ukrainians joined in this union and the act of union became extremely controversial with the Orthodox Communities. Later intervention by the Soviet authorities forced the reintegration into Eastern Orthodoxy of some Eastern Catholics.

Catholics abandoning Eastern Orthodoxy.<sup>102</sup> When Soviet Communism dominated the area, not much was heard in the West from these Catholics. With the fall of the Soviet Union and large immigration to the Americas, these people are becoming better recognized. With the establishment of the Apostolic Exarchate for Catholics of the Byzantine Rite by Pope John Paul II in 1996, these people today are now better known as Byzantine Catholics. These Churches make up the 23 sister Churches to Rome that, together, constitutes the Catholic Church.<sup>103</sup>

With these unions, the Orthodox Church decided that it could no longer be idly watching such attrition. Historically, the Orthodox had experience with those who abandoned their faith during persecutions. The occupation of the Islamic states had weakened the Church. Communism had been a direct attack of the faith itself. These unions were a whole other matter. These Christians recognized papal authority while keeping their traditions in territories that were clearly within Orthodox jurisdiction. These unions are not examples of some sort of ideal state of unity in the Church. They are revealing of what it means to be the Church, to be unifying in its very action of being. No longer could the Orthodox simply be on the defensive against Rome as heretics and schismatics. Individual unions became an irritation to the Orthodox. These unions, with the concessions granted the Eastern Catholics, undermined many of the dogmatic objections the Orthodox had used to assure the faithful of

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<sup>102</sup> An excellent review of these unions in context with the Council of Florence can be read in: "Four Hundred Years: Union of Brest" (1596-1996). "A Critical Re-evaluation". Edited by Bert Groen and Wil van den Bercken. [Eastern Christian Studies, Volume 1.] (Leuven: Peeters. 1998. Pp. x, 269. BEF 1850 paperback).

<sup>103</sup> The Roman Catholic Church is by far the most populated of all 24 Catholic Churches.

authenticity. Weaknesses in conciliatory governance made adaption to the reality of new nation states awkward and slow. Lack of full ecumenical consensus splintered the East, creating resentment and doubt.

Rome, on the other hand, made declarations that were poorly defined, such as purgatory and the assertion that the Church was ultimately protected by the Holy Spirit against morally and dogmatically errant leadership. These are distinct moments of the Church acting in recognition of its essence as enlivened by the Spirit. Adaptions to evolving cultures have often made Roman liturgies seem irreverent. The opposition to the Church during the Enlightenment and the growth of secularism weakened Church authority and dissolved Christendom as a unique blending of Church and state in the West. In the past few centuries, global events of immense power changed civilization everywhere. The two Churches, East and West, need a transformation that is only possible with conversations about dogma, faith, guidance, and spirituality. The Church unifies peoples of the whole world.<sup>xlix</sup> The unifying essence of the Church will be set free with sincere ecumenical cooperation.

## **5 CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION**

The first chapter introduced the admonitions against ecclesiastical division found from the very first letters of Paul and reiterated in the writings of Early Church Fathers. Unity in society was of major importance for the whole community within which Christians found themselves. Disunity was seen as an evil that threatened the very foundations of society.

This chapter presented examples of how early schisms arose out of heterodox controversies. In response, councils of the Church were convened to maintain unity and differentiate Christianity from heresies. Nine councils specifically dealt with promoting unity within the Church. The effects of heresy on the unity of the Church and reaction of Church leaders to the schismatic were the direct consequences of these heresies. Maintaining unity was the crux of the many councils. At these councils, revered leaders defended the faith and preached a corrected understanding of orthodoxy. The call for unity in Christianity did not require the elimination of diverse cultures and tribes within Christianity through the ages. More recent Councils have emphasized that the Church is a unity of relation.

The second chapter described how Christian unity is a bond among diverse peoples. That bond is expressed in how the community of believers is governed and that this governance was an expression of unity. The model of governance was a hybrid of Imperial Roman and the Jewish traditions. Political and social changes influenced the Church. The Fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Empire in 1453 was the major development that transformed the relation between the Eastern and Western Christianity. This change led to the eventual establishment in former mission lands of the Church of Russia. This contrasts with the unity that was maintained in the mission territories of the Western Church. This chapter explained

how the Church accommodated itself to the changes in secular politics especially in relation to the Ottoman Empire. While the immigrants from the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 sparked the Renaissance in the West, Christians of the former Byzantine Empire took a different path.

The third chapter described how the Eastern Church developed out of the fallen Byzantine Empire. The former mission land of Russia became a self-governing Church and took upon itself the task of preserving Christianity in the East. While Christendom had developed in the West during the Middle Ages, the Eastern Church did not become transnational with the Ottoman Empire impeding a united Church governance throughout the East. Russia never succumbed to the Ottoman Empire and developed the innovation of autocephaly. The five major patriarchies of the early Church encompassed many peoples in one faith and a focused system of governance. The five patriarchal Churches were interdependent. Over time all the original apostolic sees came into the Ottoman Empire except Rome. Eastern autocephaly separated the governance of the Churches in the East. Once the Ottoman Empire fell, new nation states arose and autocephaly became confused with nationalism. This chapter delved deeper into the preservation of unity in the early Church. There was a constant call for unity in the councils that addressed heretical schisms. From this, one faith was revealed, and a church of unity was professed repeatedly. This chapter contrasts the experience of autocephaly in the Eastern Church with the development of Western Christendom. The tendency of autocephaly to dissolve into phyletism was the reason for the Synod on Constantinople in 1872 condemning nationalism as a cause for Church division. The rise of nationalism had not been planned in the innovation of autocephaly.

Western Christendom developed from the state of the Roman Empire and the influence of the Church. Repeated Church councils dealt with maintaining internal unity and fought off heresies that attacked its unity. These councils preserved the integrity of the Church. The Eastern Church focused so much on being conservators of the faith, it neglected unity. At the same time, the Western Church described the Church so parochially that it excluded the East.

Chapter four reviewed several independent reunions of disenfranchised Eastern Churches with Rome. This had perpetuated the false dilemma created by the West that the East must be wrong if the West is right. A transformation in understanding is needed to acknowledge the essence of unity that is the Church.

The significance of these studies in the history of the Church unifying has been the discovery of an ontological unity not only as expressed in Church councils, but also as the very essence of the Church. The unifying actions of the Church reveal that essence of the Church. It is the very ontology of the Church to unify and this is manifested again and again in the wisdoms of the Church Fathers, the findings of the Church Councils and the repeated efforts to unite over the ages despite external forces that would attempt to divide the Church. Separation and objections to various aspects of the Church are indicative of a lack of the essence that unifies which is the very soul of the Church. The meaning of what it is to be Church is not only in what the Church does (such as offer worship), but also unity has proven to be the vital structure of the Church. The challenges of heretical schisms have forced Christians to strip the question of what it is to be Church to its essence, unity. The Church is united as worshipers and also united to the Lord. Breaks from the faith bring about the distinction of “non-church” congregations, such as the Arians. Councils of the Church give voice to that essence of unity.

This study of the common history of Church unity reveals an ontological dimension to what it is to be Church. There is a consistent call for unity as proper to the very existence of the Church and that it is one Church even over time. Heresies, politics and challenges to governance have aggravated attempts to remain in union. The insistence on unity and the persistence of the Church to remain in union reveal an ontological reality of the uniqueness of the Church. To unify comes from the very soul of the Church. Unity is the proper state of being for the Church. The vision of a transfigured Church that is united in its very being is a presage of our present-day ecumenical efforts. This ontological transfiguration should inspire us and energize our work towards unity.

As expressed by the Church Fathers and the Councils, unity in the Church is more than fellowship and a relationship with others. Unity is of the very essence of what it is to be Church. The Church transcends its membership and surpasses the disarray in its leadership. Reading through history reveals the cause for unity has also been a collaborative effort through the ages. Unity has been the work of the Church acting under the inspiration of the Spirit that is its life. Without that unifying essence, the Church is lifeless. Internal differences and external threats have challenged that unity. The example of the constant call for unity urges us to respect our differences, heroically resist outside pressures, and understand that unity does not make the Church. It is the very ontological nature and prayer of the Church to unify (John 17:21).



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## 7 ADDENDUM

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<sup>i</sup> Autocephaly: Bishops who are under no superior authority. (see: “The Oxford Dictionary of The Christian Church” edited by F.L. Cross, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1978)

<sup>ii</sup> Ecclesiology: The theology of the Church (see: “The Oxford Dictionary of The Christian Church” edited by F.L. Cross, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1978)

<sup>iii</sup> Ethnophyletism: division of the Church based on national borders (Werth, 2006).

<sup>iv</sup> Ontology can be understood as the study of reality, being as a whole and as such it is a study in metaphysics. For Whitehead, being has the qualities of existence, essence and actuality (see: “Interpretation of Whitehead’s Metaphysics,” by William Christian, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1957). Ecclesial ontology is the effort to understand the nature and very essence of the Church in all three qualities of being. It probes into the soul of the Church. It asks what constitutes the actions of the Church and studies the existence of the Church revealed in its manifestations. Ontology according to Heidegger involves the necessity of seeing what exists in time, in its historical manifestations and what distinguishes one entity’s existence from another (see: “Heidegger,” by John Richardson, Routledge Publishing, London, 2012). Plato places the soul as the source of change (see: A History of Philosophy,” by Frederick Copleston, Image Press, New York 1993). It is the soul of the Church to bring about unification. The predicament of schism shows us an ontological relativity that can be reduced to unity. (see: “Ontological Relativity and Other Essays,” by W. V. Quine, Columbia Press, New York 1969).

<sup>v</sup> Phyletism: identity of an autocephaly church with a particular nation (Werth, 2006).

<sup>vi</sup> It is noteworthy to understand that Paul was a man who preferred to follow instructions fervently. Under the training of Gamaliel, he was zealous for God (Acts 22:3). In persecuting the People of the Way, he acted upon instructions from others (Acts 22:5). He made a point to ask for authoritative instructions to carry

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out the persecutions in Damascus (Acts 9:1-2). Paul did not act without counsel. We read in Paul's letters his reiteration of the instructions he was given at the Council of Jerusalem. This is especially seen in his Letter to the Galatians with the bulk of the text devoted to the topic of how the Gentiles have freedom from the Mosaic law (Galatians 2:2 – 6:10) and, in so much of his Letter to the Romans with an almost exclusive focus on this single topic (Romans 1:16 – 15:21). Understanding the Council of Jerusalem is an aid to understanding many of Paul's letters and much of the New Testament.

<sup>vii</sup> While there may be discussions about the exact ecclesial status of Clement I, for the purposes of this paper which focus on the Roman and Greek Churches, there is mutual agreement that he was the third bishop of Rome (Meyendorff, 1992, p. 124) (Eusebius, 1965, p. 152) and that his episcopate has not been in question by the two Churches.

<sup>viii</sup> Here are three examples of exhortations for unity among the early Church Fathers:

“He, therefore, who does not assemble with the church, has given by this display his pride and he has condemned himself” (Ignatius, 2016, p. 10).

“Peter answered him, ‘Lord to whom will we go?’ Peter, on whom the church was to be built, showed in the name of the church that its rebellious and arrogant multitude may depart from the church. I speak of those who will not hear and obey. However, the church does not depart from Christ. And the church consists of those who are a people united to the priest. It is the flock that adheres to its pastor. Therefore, you should know that the bishop is in the church and the church is in the bishop. If anyone is not with the bishop, he is not in the church. The church is universal and is one. It is not cut or divided. Rather it is connected and bound together by the cement of priests who adhere one to another.” St. Cyprian of Carthage (Jurgens, 1970, p. 219)

“I say and protest that it is as wrong to divide the church as it is to fall into heresy” St. John Chrysostom (Schaff, 2007, p. 206).

<sup>ix</sup> A clarification can be found in the documents on the Church.

#### “THIRD QUESTION

Why was the expression ‘subsists in’ adopted instead of the simple word ‘is’?



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## RESPONSE

The use of this expression, which indicates the full identity of the Church of Christ with the Catholic Church, does not change the doctrine on the Church. Rather, it comes from and brings out more clearly the fact that there are 'numerous elements of sanctification and of truth' which are found outside her structure, but which 'as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, impel towards Catholic Unity'.

'It follows that these separated churches and Communities, though we believe they suffer from defects, are deprived neither of significance nor importance in the mystery of salvation. In fact, the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as instruments of salvation, whose value derives from that fullness of grace and of truth which has been entrusted to the Catholic Church'." (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2007)

<sup>x</sup> "It is also our fault if we have at times provided a pretext (to the 'right' and 'left' alike) to the view that Vatican II was a 'break' and an abandonment of the tradition" (Messori, 1987, p. 31).

"There are no leaks in this history, there are no fractures, and there is no break in continuity. In no wise did the Council intend to introduce a temporary dichotomy in the church."  
(Messori, 1987, p. 35)

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"So what, then? Did each person, of those upon whom the Holy Spirit came, speak in a single tongue of all the nations, these speaking one language, and those another, and did they somehow or other divide up the languages of all nations between them? Not like that; but each person, one person, was speaking in the language of all the nations. One person was speaking in the tongues of all nations; the unity of the church in the tongues of all nations. So there you are; here to the unity of the Catholic Church is being impressed on us, as it is spread throughout the whole world" [Sermon 268 - on the day of Pentecost] (Augustine of Hippo, 1993, p. 278).

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<sup>xii</sup> Those separated from the Church may give the appearance of being Christian, but their lack of unity separates them from the Holy Spirit that is the “life-breath of the Church” and instrument of unity. Augustine describes this relationship in the following way:

“But now, if the member is caught off from the body, the spirit does not follow, does it? And yet the member can be recognized for what it is; a finger, hand, arm, and ear. Apart from the body it retains its shape, it does not retain life. So too with persons separated from the church” [page 279, Sermon 268 - on the day of Pentecost] (Augustine of Hippo, 1993).

<sup>xiii</sup> “Tertullian, writing about 210, speaks as if it was a common practice to hold councils regularly throughout Greece, and praises the double advantage that accrued from such meetings - the handling of the deeper questions of Christian life for the common benefit and the bringing vividly before the minds of the people the fact of the universality of Christianity. Afterwards, synods were held in Africa, the earliest recorded being about 220 and gradually they spread over the Christian world” (Lindsay, 1903, p. 189).

<sup>xiv</sup> One definition of Christendom is a ‘society organized around an alliance of church and state, where the Christian faith is the official glue, the guiding principle of its laws and culture’ (Jackson, 202, p. 56).

<sup>xv</sup> **List of other significant dates**

284	Diocletian becomes Emperor of Rome
313	Edit of Milan
325	First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea
380	Emperor Theodosius I declares Christianity the official state religion
381	Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople

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431	Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus
455	Vandals sack Rome
527	Justinian I becomes Roman Emperor in Constantinople
570	Birth of the Prophet Mohammed
642	Arabs take Alexandria and burn its library
726	Iconoclastic conflict
800	Pope Leo crowns Charlemagne Emperor of the West
989	Conversion of Prince Vladimir of Kiev
1096	First Crusade
1147	Second Crusade
1190	Third Crusade
1204	Fourth Crusade
1452	Unification of Churches proclaimed in Constantinople
1453	Fall of Constantinople
1589	Patriarchate of Moscow created

<sup>xvi</sup> With the turmoil from the declarations of the Council of Florence in 1445, the Patriarch of Constantinople failed to appoint an acceptable metropolitan. In 1448, the Church in Russia held a local synod and severed ties with the pro-union of Florence Patriarch of Constantinople. Desires for a strong unified nation

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in response to the attacks of the Tartars had urged the bishops of Russia to seek the immediate appointment of a metropolitan in their own land (page 23, Obolensky, Dimitri. "Byzantium, Kiev and Moscow: A Study in Ecclesiastical Relations." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 11 (1957): 21-78. doi:10.2307/1291105).

After the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Church in Russia was still left without a patriarchal appointment. The Church in Russia gave up what little hope there was of any resolution under the occupation of the Ottomans. The Patriarchy in Constantinople that was re-established by the Sultan was corrupted by the aims of the Ottoman Empire. At this time the Church in Russia had, in fact, become self-governing, an Autocephaly (page 359, Notes on Autocephaly and Phyletism, by Philip Walter, *Religion, State & Society*, Volume 30, Number 4, 2002).

<sup>xvii</sup> Scholarius' motivation for cooperating with the Sultan is a controversial topic. What can best be surmised, in charity, is that Scholarius accepted the Sultan's overtures with reluctance. Scholarius resigned three times from his appointment and thrice the Sultan reappointed him. ("In the Lion's Den: Orthodox Christians under Ottoman Rule, 1400-1550." by Neil Paradise, University of North Florida, 2006 ([https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ojii\\_volumes/67](https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ojii_volumes/67)) All Volumes (2001-2008). 67) Scholarius had championed the cause of Union at Florence, only to be later dissuaded by Bishop Mark of Ephesus upon his return to Constantinople. Therefore, with his recent conversion there may have been some animosity towards Rome in Scholarius. However, given the severe travesty of Constantinople's fall, it would not be unfounded to believe that Scholarius had the survival of Christianity in his heart. Regardless of his motivations, the non-Christian form of his installation generated questions about his office. For over a thousand years, patriarchs had enjoyed appointments with a Christian affiliation. To the ordinary Christian, Scholarius' appointment must have seemed peculiar (See also Chapter Title: "You Cannot Have a Church Without an Empire": Political Orthodoxy in Byzantium, by James C. Skedros; Demacopoulos, George E., and Aristotle Papanikolaou, eds. *Christianity, Democracy, and the Shadow of Constantine*. New York: Fordham University, 2017). A dissertation that contains comments on this subject has been written by Victor Henri Antone Penel in 2014 entitled: "AN

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INVESTIGATION OF THE CHANGE IN POSITION OF GEORGE SCHOLARIOS FROM PRO-UNION OF THE WESTERN AND EASTERN CHURCHES TO ANTI-UNION.”

<sup>xviii</sup> Before 1453, the Ottomans had experience of occupying Christian lands. The Vandal Arians had dominated the Church of North Africa. The heretical Christology had predisposed the people to Islam (see page 4, Speel, C. J. (1960) “The Disappearance of Christianity from North Africa in the Wake of the Rise of Islam”, Church History. Cambridge University Press, 29(4), pp. 379–397. doi: 10.2307/3161925.). Since Muslims understood Islam to contain the inevitable ‘true religion’ and having the experience of many converts to Islam in North Africa, the Sultan may not have seen Christianity as a threat. Instituting the millet system was gain to the Ottomans and the Christians. Royal protection in exchange for the taxes collected benefited both parties. Most of the Christians were left in peace (though despised as a lower class) and the Ottomans collected taxes indirectly through the Christian hierarchy that gave a more politically correct public appearance to the new economic burden. Those that opposed the Sultan were sold into slavery or outright killed (page 299, *Lost to the West*, Lars Brownworth).

<sup>xix</sup> The Koran specifically calls for religious tolerance: "Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from Error" [Quran, 2:226]. This concept of toleration was formalized in the Ottoman dynasty as part of Islamic dhimmi practice. Sultan Mehmed II installed the millet system granting internal autonomy to the Christians as an act of both state and religious toleration while the Patriarch collected taxes for the Ottoman Empire as tribute (see page 3, “In the Lion’s Den: Orthodox Christians under Ottoman Rule, 1400-1550” by Neil Paradise, University of North Florida, 2006 ([https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ojii\\_volumes/67](https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/ojii_volumes/67)) All Volumes (2001-2008). 67).

Mohammed II’s official declaration safeguarding the Patriarch, read according to the chronicler George Phrantzes, "He [Mohammed II] gave written ordinances, testimonials bearing the imperial signature, that no

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one was to molest him or oppose him; he was to have exemption from all taxes and personal inviolability" (George PHRANTZES, *Chronicon* (Bonn ed.), p. 308. 8 CRITOBULUS).

<sup>xx</sup> Official Ottoman policy called for tolerance and acceptance. However, there were many cases where church properties were seized, church officials were compromised by intrigues and humiliated with many Christians being forced into the Islamic religion. (16) However, several other researchers give us a different story. The taking of Constantinople was a significant event in Ottoman history also. It transformed them into a significant imperial power that survived through to the First World War (page 26, Coles, P. (1968). "The Ottoman Impact on Europe", London: Thames and Hudson.) As such, from the very start the Ottomans organized their expanded empire in sustainable ways. With the exception of taking most of the very young boys of Constantinople as slaves, forcing them to be Islamic and then training them to be an elite military force for the empire, there were few forced religious conversions (pages 179-180, "A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change" 2nd ed., Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries, Routledge, London 2005). Some Historians refer to the post-1453 Ottoman Empire as having a sort of "PAX OTTOMANICA" order (page 174, "A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change" 2nd ed., Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries, Routledge, London 2005). The historian George Arnakis comments: "Ottoman policy, for the most part, was not hostile to the Orthodox Church, the reason is obvious. It was essential to keep the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan from uniting with the Catholic Church, which was associated with the struggle to drive Islam out of Europe" (page 127, Arnakis, G. (1963). "The role of religion in the development of Balkan nationalism", in Jelavich and Jelavich (1963)). For the common Christian there was not severe oppression.

"It was a dynastic Empire in which the only loyalty demanded of all its multifarious inhabitants was allegiance to the sultan. The loyalty demanded of those who did not hold office consisted in no more than not rebelling and paying taxes in cash, kind or services. Even these were often negotiable. It was in the end the person of the sultan and not religious, ethnic or other identity that held the Empire together" (page 3, Imber, C. (2002) *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.).

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Local autonomy for the citizens allowed them to continue as Christians and, to the economic benefit of the Ottomans, continue in their business pursuits.

“Provided the taxes were paid, the Turks did not care what their subjects did with themselves. Local administration, trade and education were entirely their own affair” (pages 103-4, Woodhouse, C. (1977) *Modern Greece: A Short History*, London: Faher).

<sup>xxi</sup> Scholarius was a well-known monk who was the theological advisor to the emperor during the Council of Florence. (Page 393, “The Christian East and the Rise of the Papacy,” Aristeides Papadakis, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, New York, 1994). Scholarius was a Scholastic theologian and argued for the primacy of the papacy during the council of Florence (page 492, “The Christian East and the Rise of the Papacy”, Aristeides Papadakis, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, New York, 1994). While none of the delegates were forced to sign the union of Florence (page 397, “The Christian East and the Rise of the Papacy”, Aristeides Papadakis, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, New York, 1994), Mark, the bishop of Ephesus and the metropolitan of Stavropolis, Isaias, were the only ones who did not sign (page 407, “The Christian East and the Rise of the Papacy”, Aristeides Papadakis, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, New York, 1994). After the Council, Mark of Emphasis returned to Constantinople and instigated a rejection of the union (page 395, “The Christian East and the Rise of the Papacy”, Aristeides Papadakis, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, New York, 1994). Before Mark’s death in 1444, he converted Scholarius to his cause of calling for a rejection of the union and afterwards made it known that Scholarius was his favored disciple in the continued efforts to reject any union with Rome (page 395, “The Christian East and the Rise of the Papacy”, Aristeides Papadakis, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, New York, 1994). It is perhaps for the well-known reason of his ardent objection to the union that the Sultan selected Scholarius as his anti-Rome choice for Patriarch of Constantinople.

<sup>xxii</sup> Patriarch Joseph Quercus had to handle many external issues facing the Church of Constantinople after 1453. As Patriarch of the Christian millet, he had to raise funds to pay taxes to the Sultan. As in the case of the Sultan’s request for an ecclesial favor of dissolving a marriage for the Sultan courtier, George Amiroutsis, he was facing royal humiliations if he did not grant the Sultan’s wish. The Christian Church had faced such

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defenses of the biblical principle of the indissolubility of marriage before. In 1356, King Kasimir III, of Poland, asked for a decree of annulment regarding his marriage to Adelheid of Hesse. Louis VII of France had made such a request regarding his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152 (Eleanor had failed to produce a child for him). Bernard, Count of Armagnae in 1410 asked for a similar dissolution regarding Bonne of Berry. All these were denied (in the case of Kasimir III, his original petition was denied, his children by his later marriage were given legitimacy by Pope Gregory XI on October 1, 1371 in order to keep peace within the kingdom). All these cases dealt with issues of quasi-sanguinity of affinity (cases where there was a more remote relationship or there was simply the appearance of a relationship). While cannon law forbade outright sanguinity, it did provide a process of tribunal review of quasi-sanguinity to determine the exact nature of the relationship. Dispensations were allowed where there was a finding that an impediment did not indeed exist (such as a familiar relation, not by blood, but by the marriage of guardians). In the case of lesser known people, cases went before the tribunal and were reviewed by the local ordinary. In the case of people of more renown, the final endorsement was reserved to the Pope to avoid even the appearance of scandal. The case of Henry VIII of England in 1527 concerned the king's request to reverse a declaration that was no impediment in the quasi-sanguine relationship with Catherine of Aragon. The lack of impediment had been the result of an earlier tribunal finding and endorsed by the Pope upon review. The decision to refuse a reversal of the earlier declaration was complicated by Emperor Charles V of Spain (the uncle to Catherine who wanted the declaration of no impediment to remain) was making war against the Papal States. The succeeding Pope also refused Henry's request for a reversal and petition for an annulment declaring that the finding of the previous tribunal was in order and the review of the previous Pope as legitimate. In response, Henry declared that Church proceedings were superior to natural law, separated from Rome, established the Church of England as an independent entity and with the help of his confidant, Thomas Cromwell, had the Church of England make declarations in his favor. The end result for Christendom was schism (see "Incest and the Medieval Imagination", Elizabeth Archibald, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001).

In the Middle Ages, the state recognized itself as part of Christendom. The title given to Henry VIII of England was given when he promulgated his thesis, "The Defense of the Seven Sacraments" which included a



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defense against Martin Luther's attack on the sacred status of matrimony. The marriage bond was seen more as an ecclesial affair while the estate of a marriage was the realm of the government (see also the conflict of 1122 between Pope Callixtus II and Emperor Henry V and ended in the Concordat of Worms, the agreement distinguished between the temporal and spiritual powers). This is attested to in the example of Henry VIII seeking ecclesial approval only, he never sought state approval (when Rome denied his request, he created and appealed to the Church of England).

Early in Church history, natural law, biblical principles and Christian traditions were incorporated into a Canon of Church laws concerning marriage. This made the harmony of natural moral law and ecclesial teachings transparent to all. In the case of findings of annulments and subsequent marriages, these are made available in the Code of Canon Law, Canon 1671-1701 (using the new codified numbers and reference system): "BOOK VII, PROCESSES, PART III CERTAIN SPECIAL PROCESSES, TITLE I MARRIAGE PROCESSES, including CHAPTER I CASES TO DECLARE THE NULLITY OF MARRIAGE" Canon 1684 further details declarations of nullity and appeals. Canon 1644 details tribunal procedures and the cases that require decrees (as in the case of Henry VIII of England). (see <http://www.vatican.va/archive>).

Following are excerpts from canon law as it is today:

Can. 1684 §1. "After the sentence which first declared the nullity of the marriage has been confirmed at the appellate grade either by a decree or by a second sentence, the persons whose marriage has been declared null can contract a new marriage as soon as the decree or second sentence has been communicated to them unless a prohibition attached to the sentence or decree or established by the local ordinary has forbidden this. §2. The prescripts of canon 1644 must be observed even if the sentence that declared the nullity of the marriage was confirmed not by a second sentence but by a decree." (see: Can. 1643 Cases concerning the status of persons, including cases concerning the separation of spouses, never become *res iudicata* (a matter definitively judged; no appeals are allowed)).

Can. 1644 §1. "If a second concordant sentence has been rendered in a case concerning the status of persons, recourse can be made at any time to the appellate tribunal if new and grave proofs or arguments are brought forward within the peremptory time limit of thirty days from the proposed challenge. Within a month from when the new proofs and arguments are brought forward, however, the

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appellate tribunal must establish by decree whether a new presentation of the case must be admitted or not."

<sup>xxiii</sup> Those who fled the Ottoman Empire for Russia never looked back. The Russian Church broke completely from Constantinople. After the declaration of autocephaly, Isidor of Kiev proclaimed that never again would Russia take orders from Byzantium (page 275, "Sailing from Byzantium", Colin Wells Delta Press 2007). Russia had come of age. By 142, Russia was free of the Mongols and was the most powerful state in the region. Integral to the motion for independence was the idea that the Church in Constantinople had committed heresy and was in schism by proclaiming the Union of Florence. (page 277, "Sailing from Byzantium", Colin Wells Delta Press 2007). There was no looking back, no aid to be given to the heretics.

The diaspora recreated Byzantium in Russia (page 303, *Lost to the West*, Lars Brownworth, Three Rivers Press, 2009). Since Church and Nation were so closely identified and there was complete disobedience of the Patriarch of Constantinople, there was only the true Church in Russia (page 302, "Lost to the West", Lars Brownworth, Three Rivers Press, 2009).

Russia was the renovation of the Christian Empire while Europe undertook a Renaissance of a bygone culture (page 283, "Byzantium and the Slavs", Dimitri Obolensky, St Vladimir Seminary Press, 1994). Byzantium ceased to be and now a third (and final) "Rome" came to be.

Poslanie Filofeia, proclaiming Moscow as the Third Rome in 1553 wrote:

"So be aware, lover of God and Christ, that all Christian empires have come to an end and are gathered together in the singular empire of our sovereign in accordance to the books of prophecy, and this is the Russian empire: because two Romes have fallen, and a third stands, and a fourth there shall not be." (Poslanie o zlykh dnekh i chasekh. Rusi. Konets XV - pervaiia polovina Moskva 1984, p. 452., translated in: Poe, Marshall. "Moscow, the Third Rome: The Origins and Transformations of a 'Pivotal Moment'." *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas, Neue Folge*, 49, no. 3 (2001): 412-29)

766: Virgil made Bishop of Salzburg making several missionary campaigns into the Slavic principality of Carantania.

862 - 879: Reign of Varangian King Rurik, founder of Kievan Rus'

879 - 912: Reign of Oleg of Novgorod, in Kievan Rus'

882: Oleg of Novgorod moves capital Novgorod to Kiev.

912 - 945: Reign of Igor of Kiev

945: Assassination of Igor of Kiev by Drevlians.

945 - 950: Olga seeks revenge on the Drevlians for Igor's death.

945 - 963: Olga, wife of Igor, reigns as regent for Sviatoslav.

963 - 972: Reign of Sviatoslav, who expands Kievan Rus'

972 - 980: Reign of Yaropolk I in Kievan Rus.

980 - 1015: Reign of Vladimir I (the Great) in Kievan Rus'; converts to Christianity.

1015 - 1019: Reign of Sviatopolk in Kievan Rus'.

1019 - 1054: Reign of Yaroslav I (the Wise) in Kievan Rus'

1054 - 1078: Yaroslav I's sons fight each other for control; Kievan Rus' splinters.

1078 - 1337: Kievan Rus' broken into separate sections.

1237 - 1242: The Mongol Invasion; Kievan Rus' conquered.

<sup>xxv</sup> In many ways we might think that enculturation began on Pentecost with the people hearing the proclamation in their own language (Acts 2:6). There are many instances of enculturation as missionary efforts spread throughout Asia, Africa and the world. In Europe, the Roman Church did not adapt in a uniform way, however. Indeed, because of the demand that the Church be a political entity during transitions, the Latin language and the culture of Rome was imposed in order to create uniformity and avoid ambiguities. The Byzantine Church did not see the need for this sort of imposition. "Unlike the Church of Rome, The Orthodox Church has never been rigid on Language. Its normal policy, following the example of Saints Cyril and Methodius, was to learn and hold services in the language of the people, so Greek was replaced by Slavonic, through Bulgaria, Serbia and ultimately Russia" (Bowman, 2012, p. 18).

<sup>xxvi</sup> John Wesley's 75th sermon "On Schism" addressed not so much the separation from Rome, but the schisms that were forming within his own congregation. The only "schism" that he considered not sinful was that which was necessitated in order to avoid sin, as in remaining in the Church of England if one found its

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practices working against the commandments of God (paragraph 7, page 171, "THE WORKS OF THE REVEREND JOHN WESLEY", First Edition, Volume II, translated by John Emory, Published by J Emory and B Waugh, New York, 1831).

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"After the apostles, James the brother of the Lord surnamed the Just was made head of the Church at Jerusalem. Many indeed are called James. This one was holy from his mother's womb. He drank neither wine nor strong drink, ate no flesh, never shaved or anointed himself with ointment or bathed. He alone had the privilege of entering the Holy of Holies, since indeed he did not use woolen vestments but linen and went alone into the temple and prayed in behalf of the people, insomuch that his knees were reputed to have acquired the hardness of camels' knees" (Wace, 1892, p. 361).

xxviii In the case of the proposed canons of the ecumenical Council of Chalcedon, we can see such grasping for power as in the proposed (but rejected) Canon 28 we find:

"Following in every way the decrees of the holy fathers and recognizing the canon which has recently been read out—the canon of the 150 most devout bishops who assembled in the time of the great Theodosius of pious memory, then emperor, in imperial Constantinople, new Rome — we issue the same decree and resolution concerning the prerogatives of the most holy Church of the same Constantinople, new Rome. The fathers rightly accorded prerogatives to the see of older Rome, since that is an imperial city; and moved by the same purpose the 150 most devout bishops apportioned equal prerogatives to the most holy see of new Rome, reasonably judging that the city which is honoured by the imperial power and senate and enjoying privileges equaling older imperial Rome, should also be elevated to her level in ecclesiastical affairs and take second place after her. The metropolitans of the dioceses of Pontus, Asia and Thrace, but only these, as well as the bishops of these dioceses who work among non-Greeks, are to be ordained by the aforesaid most holy see of the most holy Church in Constantinople. That is, each metropolitan of the aforesaid dioceses along with the bishops of the province ordain the bishops of the province, as has been declared in the divine canons; but the metropolitans of the aforesaid dioceses, as has been said, are to be ordained by the archbishop of Constantinople, once agreement has been reached by vote in the usual way and has been reported to him" (L'Huillier, 1996, p. 267) .

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<sup>xxix</sup> The letter of Bishop Anatolius of Constantinople to Pope Leo asked forgiveness for any

misunderstanding that the proposal of Canon 28 may have had:

“As for those things which the universal Council of Chalcedon recently ordained in favor of the Church of Constantinople, let Your Holiness be sure that there was no fault in me, who from my youth have always loved peace and quiet, keeping myself in humility. It was the most reverend clergy of the Church of Constantinople who were eager about it, and they were equally supported by the most reverend priests of those parts, who agreed about it. Even so, the whole force of confirmation of the acts was reserved for the authority of Your Blessedness. Therefore, let Your Holiness know for certain that I did nothing to further the matter, knowing always that I held myself bound to avoid the lusts of pride and covetousness” (Allies, 1879, p. 207).

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“The impression one receives during this period from the study of the history of the monasteries, which no doubt reflects in some measure the general conditions of the church, is that the Coptic Church declined sadly and that it had lost almost all of its former spiritual vitality. This spiritual paucity is also reflected in the almost complete absence of theological creativity from the thirteenth to the twentieth century. True, there were no longer any serious persecutions and devastations of Coptic properties, and the Church as a whole was tolerated, yet the *jizya* (poll tax) was collected from the Copts until 1815” [loc 1377] (Meinardus, 1999).

<sup>xxxi</sup> Typical of Philemon’s preaching is the following recommendation:

“The soul has three aspects: the intelligent, the incentive and the desiring aspect. The sins of the intelligent aspect are unbelief, heresy, folly, blasphemy, ingratitude and assent to sins originating in the soul's passible aspect. These vices are cured through unwavering faith in God and in true, undeviating and orthodox teachings, through the continual study of the inspired utterances of the Spirit, through pure and ceaseless prayer, and through the offering of thanks to God” [loc 11164] (Corinth, 1782).

<sup>xxxii</sup>

“From which model has arisen a distinction between bishops also, and by an important ordinance it has been provided that everyone should not claim everything for himself: but that there should be in each province one whose opinion should have the priority among the

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brethren: and again that certain whose appointment is in the greater cities should undertake a fuller responsibility, through whom the care of the universal Church should converge towards Peter's one seat, and nothing anywhere should be separated from its Head" (Feltoe, 2012, p. 38).

<sup>xxxiii</sup> From Theodore, Bishop of Cyrus, to Leo: "To Leo, Bishop of Rome, if Paul appealed to Peter how much more must ordinary folk have recourse to his successor" (Feltoe, 2012, p. 8). In a letter to Pope Hadrian concerning Icons in the 9th century, Emperors Constantine and Irene wrote conspicuously acknowledging the continued supremacy of the Bishop of Rome and called for unity:

"So, when they meet with the other priests who are here, the ancient tradition of our holy fathers may be synodically confirmed, and every evil plant of tares may be rooted out, and the words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ may be fulfilled, that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.' And after this, may there be no further schism and separation in the one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of which Christ our true God is the Head" [page 666] (Wace, 1800).

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Here are a few of the calls for unity by the Church Fathers through the ages as listed in Jimmy Akin's book "The Fathers Know Best" (Location references are all from Mr. Akin's book) (Akin, 2010):

Location 2490 (Akin, 2010)

ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

"You ought to know that the bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the bishop; and if anyone be not with the bishop, then he is not in the Church, nor those who flatter themselves in vain and creep in, not having peace with God's priests, and think that they communicate secretly with some; while the Church, which is catholic and one, is not cut nor divided, but is indeed connected and bound together by the cement of priests who cohere with one another [Letters 68:8 ( 254)]."

Location 2532 (Akin, 2010)

ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

"For both heretics and schismatics style their congregations churches. But heretics, in holding false opinions regarding God, do injury to the faith itself; while schismatics, on the other hand, in wicked separations break off from brotherly charity, although they may believe just what we believe. As a result neither do the heretics belong to the Catholic Church, which loves God; nor do the schismatics form a part of the same, inasmuch as it loves the neighbor, and consequently readily forgives the neighbor's sins, because it prays

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that forgiveness may be extended to itself by him who has reconciled us to himself, doing away with all past things, and calling us to a new life [Faith and the Creed 10:21 ( 393)].”

Location 2741 (Akin, 2010)

ST. OPTATUS OF MILEVIS

“You cannot then deny that you do know that upon Peter first in the city of Rome was bestowed the episcopal cathedra, on which sat Peter, the head of all the apostles (for which reason he was called Cephas), that, in this one cathedra, unity should be preserved by all [Schism of the Donatists 2:2 (c. 367)].”

Location 2744 (Akin, 2010)

ST. AMBROSE OF MILAN

“But you say [Mt16:18], the Church was founded upon Peter: although elsewhere the same is attributed to all the apostles, and they all receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and the strength of the Church depends upon them all, yet one among the Twelve is chosen so that when a head has been appointed, there may be no occasion for schism [Against Jovinianus 1:26 (c. 393)].”

Location 2990 (Akin, 2010)

ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

“The Lord says to Peter: ‘I say to you,’ he says, ‘that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it. And to you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven . . .’ [Mt 16:18–19]. On him he builds the Church, and commands him to feed the sheep [Jn 21:17], and although he assigns a like power to all the apostles, yet he founded a single chair [cathedra], and he established by his own authority a source and an intrinsic reason for that unity. Indeed, the others were also what Peter was [i.e., apostles], but a primacy is given to Peter, by which it is made clear that there is one Church and one chair. . . . If someone does not hold fast to this unity of Peter, can he think that he holds the faith? [Unity of the Catholic Church 4; first edition (Treatise 1:4) ( 251)].”

Location 3040 (Akin, 2010)

ST. AMBROSE OF MILAN

“[The Novatian heretics] have not the succession of Peter, who hold not the chair of Peter, which they rend by wicked schism; and this, too, they do, wickedly denying that sins can be forgiven [by the sacrament of confession] even in the Church, whereas it was said to Peter: ‘I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on

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earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven' [Mt 16:19] [Penance 1:7:33]."

Location 3179 (Akin, 2010)

ST. OPTATUS OF MILEVIS

"You cannot then deny that you know that upon Peter first in the city of Rome was bestowed the episcopal cathedra, on which he sat, the head of all the apostles (for which reason he was called Cephas), that, in this one cathedra, unity should be preserved by all. Neither do the apostles proceed individually on their own, and anyone who would [presume to] set up another chair in opposition to that single chair would, by that very fact, be a schismatic and a sinner. . . . Recall, then, the origins of your chair, those of you who wish to claim for yourselves the title of holy Church [Schism of the Donatists 2:2 (c. 367)]."

Location 5635 (Akin, 2010)

ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS

"In the Church God has placed apostles, prophets, teachers, and every other working of the Spirit, of whom none are sharers who do not conform to the Church, but who defraud themselves of life by an evil mind and an even worse way of acting. Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace [Against Heresies 3:24:1 (c. 189)]. [The spiritual man] shall also judge those who give rise to schisms, who are destitute of the love of God, and who look to their own special advantage rather than to the unity of the Church; and who for trifling reasons, or any kind of reason that occurs to them, cut in pieces and divide the great and glorious body of Christ, and so far as they are able, destroy it—men who talk of peace while they give rise to war, and who in truth strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. For they can bring about no 'reformation' of enough importance to compensate for the evil arising from their schism."

Location 5689 (Akin, 2010)

ST. JEROME

"Heretics bring sentence upon themselves since by their own choice they withdraw from the Church, a withdrawal that, since they are aware of it, constitutes damnation. Between heresy and schism there is this difference: heresy involves perverse doctrine, while schism separates one from the Church on account of disagreement with the bishop. Nevertheless, there is no schism that does not trump up a heresy to justify its departure from the Church [Commentaries on Titus 3:10–11 (c. 386)]."



“In compunction of soul, and invoking the Grace from on high that comes down from the Father of Lights (St. James 1:17), setting in our midst the Gospel of Christ, ‘in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’ (Colossians 2:3), and comparing phyletism both to the teaching of the Gospel and to the age-old polity of the Church of God, we have discovered that it is not only alien, but also diametrically opposed to them, and we perceive that the transgressions that have occurred in the formation of their [the Bulgarians’] phyletistic conventicle [παρὰσυναγωγή (parasynagōgē)], when enumerated one by one, are manifestly exposed by the corpus of the Sacred Canons. Wherefore, together with our Holy and God-bearing Fathers ‘embracing with gladness the Divine Canons, holding fast all the decrees of the same without alteration, whether they have been set forth by the holy trumpets of the Spirit, the all-laudable Apostles, or by the Holy Seven Ecumenical Synods,<sup>67</sup> or by Synods locally assembled for the promulgation of such decrees, or by our Holy Fathers, for all of these, being illumined by the same Spirit, decreed such things as were expedient’ (Canon I of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod), moved by the Holy Spirit: We denounce, censure, and condemn phyletism, to wit, racial discrimination and nationalistic disputes, rivalries, and dissensions in the Church of Christ, as antithetical to the teaching of the Gospel and the Sacred Canons of our Blessed Fathers, ‘who uphold the Holy Church and, ordering the entire Christian commonwealth, guide it to Divine piety.’” (see: Τὰ Δογματικά καὶ Συμβολικά Μνημεῖα τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, Vol. II, pp. 1014–1015.; Page 152, The Ecumenical Synods of the Orthodox Church, A Concise History Item Number: BKM325, Publication Data: Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2012 Second Edition, by Protopresbyter James Thornton)

xxxvi Canons of the Council of Constantinople (381),

“Canon 2: The bishops are not to go beyond their dioceses to churches lying outside of their bounds, nor bring confusion on the churches; but let the Bishop of Alexandria, according to the canons, alone administer the affairs of Egypt; and let the bishops of the East manage the East alone, the privileges of the Church in Antioch, which are mentioned in the canons of Nice, being preserved; and let the bishops of the Asian Diocese administer the Asian affairs only; and the Pontic bishops only Pontic matters; and the Thracian bishops only Thracian affairs. And let not bishops go beyond their dioceses for ordination or any other ecclesiastical ministrations, unless they be invited. And the aforesaid canon concerning dioceses being observed, it is evident that the synod of every province will administer the affairs of that particular province as was decreed at Nice. But the Churches of God in heathen nations must be governed according to the custom which has prevailed from the times of the Fathers.”

“Let us cleave, therefore, to the innocent and righteous, since these are the elect of God. Why are there strifes, and tumults, and divisions, and schisms, and wars among you? Have we not [all] one God and one Christ? Is there not one Spirit of grace poured out upon us? And have we not one calling in Christ? Why do we divide and tear to pieces the members of Christ, and raise up strife against our own body, and have reached such a height of madness as to forget that ‘we are members one of another?’ Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how He said, ‘Woe to that man [by whom offenses come]! It were better for him that he had never been born, than that he should cast a stumbling-block before one of my elect. Yea, it were better for him that a millstone should be hung about [his neck], and he should be sunk in the depths of the sea, than that he should cast a stumbling-block before one of my little ones. Your schism has subverted [the faith of] many, has discouraged many, has given rise to doubt in many, and has caused grief to us all. And still your sedition continueth’.” [loc 561] *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians* (The Apostolic Fathers Book 1) by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson (Clement, 1885)

CHAPTER. XLVII.—“YOUR RECENT DISCORD IS WORSE THAN THE FORMER WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THE TIMES OF PAUL”. “Take up the epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul. What did he write to you at the time when the Gospel first began to be preached? Truly, under the inspiration of the Spirit, he wrote to you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because even then parties had been formed among you. But that inclination for one above another entailed less guilt upon you, inasmuch as your partialities were then shown towards apostles, already of high reputation, and towards a man whom they had approved. But now reflect who those are that have perverted you, and lessened the renown of your far-famed brotherly love. It is disgraceful, beloved, yea, highly disgraceful, and unworthy of your Christian profession, that such a thing should be heard of as that the most steadfast and ancient Church of the Corinthians should, on account of one or two persons, engage in sedition against its presbyters. And this rumor has reached not only us, but those also who are unconnected with us; so that, through your infatuation, the name of the Lord is blasphemed, while danger is also brought upon yourselves.” [loc 570] *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians* (The Apostolic Fathers Book 1) by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson (Clement, 1885).

“Yet the endorsement failed to have the desired effect. The Arles verdict and imperial approval were expected to marginalize if not to douse dissent. But dissidents soon capitalized on an outpouring of African sentiment against Roman occupation and landlords to fortify their coalition, consecrating as bishop of Carthage Donatus, a resourceful leader who masterminded a campaign that, within a century, gave the secessionists’ churches— the *pars Donati* or Donatists— a commanding position in several African provinces”(Kaufman, 2017, p. 204).

“But if the conservatives (who were the mass of the Eastern bishops) had signed the creed with a good conscience, they had no idea of making it their working belief. They were not Arians—or they would not have torn up the Arianising creed at Nicaea; but if they had been hearty Nicenes, no influence of the Court could have kept up an Arianising reaction for half a century. Christendom as a whole was neither Arian nor Nicene, but conservative. If the East was not Nicene, neither was it Arian, but conservative: and if the West was not Arian, neither was it Nicene, but conservative also. But conservatism was not the same in East and West. Eastern conservatism inherited its doctrine from the age of subordination theories, and dreaded the Nicene definition as needless and dangerous. But the Westerns had no great interest in the question and could scarcely even translate its technical terms into Latin, and in any case their minds were much more legal than the Greek; so they simply fell back on the authority of the Great Council” Loc 3044, *History of the Eastern Roman Empire - Book I of III* by J.B. Bury, Norman Baynes (Baynes, 2014).

“Our familiar Western division of Church History into three periods—the Patristic, the Medieval, and the Modern does not rightly apply to the Eastern half of Christendom. There were no Middle Ages in the Oriental Churches, for the simple reason that there was no Renaissance or Reformation to inaugurate a third period from which those ages could be sharply divided—no terminus ad quem. Nevertheless, other events roughly mark off a corresponding block of time. In the West the chief cause of the immense change that broke the classic traditions of the past and introduced medievalism was the Teutonic flood of colonization, before which half the Roman Empire crumbled away, and which ultimately issued in the shaping of the nations of Europe. About the same time the tempest of Mohammedanism arose in Arabia to sweep over some of the fairest provinces of the Eastern branch of the empire, tearing them off limb by limb, and leaving only a truncated torso to represent the dominion of the Caesars.” [loc 2437], *Christian Classics CHRISTIANITY DIVIDED The Eastern Churches & Orthodoxy*, by Walter Adeney, Gary Z. Alexander (Adeney, 2013).

“On the other hand, the patriarchs established contacts with the Protestants. Stephan Gerlach, a Lutheran chaplain to the Austrian embassy, who spent five years in Constantinople (1573–78), served as an intermediary between the Lutherans and the patriarch Jeremias II. Although nothing positive on the theological level resulted from these contacts, they did produce Martin Crusius’s *Turcograecia*, which made known to western Europeans the problems of the Great Church in captivity. [E. Legrand, ‘Notice biographique sur Jean et Th’eodose Zygomas’, *Recueil de textes et de traductions publi’e par les Professeurs de l’Ecole des langues orientales vivantes* `a l’occasion du VIIIe Congr`es international des orientalistes tenu `a Stockholm en 1889 (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1889), 67–264, esp. 78–86. Cf. G. de Gregorio, *Costantinopoli – Tubinga – Roma, ovvero la duplice conversione di un manoscritto bizantino.*” (vat.gr.738), *BZ* 93 (2000), 37–107, esp. 78–88.], Page 185, *THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY, VOLUME 5, Eastern Christianity*, Edited by MICHAEL ANGOLD, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

“Now, the universality of the Catholic Church is objective: the universal – cosmic - character of Christianity concerns the entire world, ‘all nations’. On the other hand, the universality of the Roman Empire can be described as subjective. The historical myopia of the classical world has been pointed out by Spengler. The same myopia, or subjectivism, marked also the classical concept of the universe. The Hellenistic *oikoumene* tended to designate solely the world of Hellenism; likewise, the Roman Empire was thought of by its denizens as containing the world, to be the *orbis terrarum*, although the existence of polities and peoples outside it was well known to them” (Toumanoff, 1955, p. 417).

“Before the fall of the Eastern Empire, its societal monism showed a change of emphasis. The once multi-national policy was in its final phase dwindling till it became a Greek city-state, and, with the imperial structure on the verge of destruction, Greek nationality appeared to be the only vital element in it. Accordingly, the temporal element, which continued monistically to control the spiritual, did so less in its political aspect now, and increasingly more in its ethnic, its phyletic, aspect. In other words, the local Imperial Church, which had been formed through a secession from the Church Universal, now become a local national Church. This is the reason why all the attempts of the Palaeologan emperors and of the intellectual elite supporting them to effect a reunion with the Apostolic See were met with the nation’s rejection. Monistic Byzantine Orthodoxy was no longer the emperor’s thing : it was a phyletic thing” (Toumanoff, 1955, p. 428).

“According to the weight of evidence, then, at no time were the Russians willing to entertain the idea of Union, or even of a Council. Yet the Union [of Florence] meant to them the disappearance of the hitherto acknowledged supreme source of Orthodoxy and authority. Into the vacuum stepped the Grand Prince of Moscow” (Cherniavsky, 1955, p. 356).

“The comfortable conceits of otherness should not be overlooked and disregarded. Such self-serving postures generate the kind of cynicism, apathy and hubris that impede dialogue and hinder understanding of similarities and differences between the two protagonists, Orthodox and West” [page 210] (Prodromou, 2013).

“ANCIENT EPITOME OF CANON VI The Bishop of Alexandria shall have jurisdiction over Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis. As also the Roman bishop over those subject to Rome. So, too, the Bishop of Antioch and the rest over those who are under them. If any be a bishop contrary to the judgment of the Metropolitan, let him be no bishop. Provided it be in accordance with the canons by the suffrage of the majority, if three object, their objection shall be of no force.”[ SOURCE: Henry R. Percival, ed., \_ “The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church”\_, Vol XIV of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, 2nd series, edd. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, (repr. Edinburgh: T&T Clark; Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988, “DOCUMENTS FROM THE FIRST COUNCIL OF NICEA, THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, 325” ) (Percival, 1988)

xlviii It should be understood that the Patriarchy of Constantinople was weakened by the millet system of the Ottomans and the popular rejection of the reunion Florence were major factors. Page 429, note 42, “Under the Turks, the Constantinopolitan patriarch indeed attempted to gather Caesar's inheritance, but his claims could be enforced only by the might of Ottoman arms. Outside the Sultan's realm (except, at first, in Russia), he was allowed merely a vague primacy among the heads of the other phyletic Churches” ( “Moscow the Third Rome: Genesis and Significance of a Politico-Religious Idea”, Author Cyril Toumanoff, Source: The

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Catholic Historical Review, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Jan., 1955), pp. 411-447 Published by: Catholic University of America Press (Toumanoff, 1955).

<sup>xlix</sup> Reading Luke 11:23 gives an understanding of the call for unity in the Church and the unifying nature of the Church. A source for further reading on Unity and other Marks of the Church can be found in the "Catechism of the Catholic Church," Second Edition, - Part One: The Profession of Faith, Section Two: The Profession of Christian Faith, Chapter Three: "I Believe in the Holy Spirit," Article Nine: I Believe in the Holy Catholic Church," Paragraph Three: "The Church is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic." Parts: 811 - 822.